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Abstract <p>The Government Printing Office (GPO) is the principal agent for federal printing. Specifically, all printing for the three branches of government with a few exceptions is required to be done by GPO. GPO also disseminates and sells government publications through programs managed by the Superintendent of Documents. The Superintendent disseminates government publications to the public through the depository library program and sells publications online, through 23 bookstores, and by mail order. Until recently, the dissemination and sales programs dealt mostly in paper, microfiche, or CD-ROM formats. However, advances in electronic publishing technologies and the availability of government publications on the World Wide Web are affecting paper-based dissemination and sales and are raising questions about the direction and future of the Federal Depository Library Program. The conference report 1 for the legislative branch appropriations for 2001 required that we submit to you, by March 30, 2001, a study on electronic dissemination of government information. Specifically, we were required to</p>		
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Abbreviations

ACSiS	Acquisition, Classification and Shipment Information System
ADDS	Automated Depository Distribution System
AFGE	American Federation of Government Employees
CD-ROM	Compact Disk–Read Only Memory
CGP	Catalog of Government Publications
DDIS	Depository Distribution Information System
DSS	Document Sales Service
EIDS	Electronic Information Dissemination Services
FDLP	Federal Depository Library Program
GAO	General Accounting Office
GCIU	Graphics Communications International Union
GPO	Government Printing Office
IES	International Exchange Service
JCP	Joint Committee on Printing
LDS	Library Programs Service
MARC	Machine-Readable Cataloging
MOCAT	Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications
NCLIS	National Commission on Libraries and Information Sciences
OCLC	Online Computer Library Center
OIRM	Office of Information Resources Management
OTA	Office of Technology Assessment
PIRA	Public Information Resources Administration
PIRAP	Public Information Resources Access Program
U.S.C.	United States Code



**United States General Accounting Office
Washington, DC 20548**

March 30, 2001

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Jr.
Chairman
The Honorable Christopher J. Dodd
Ranking Member
Committee on Rules and Administration
United States Senate

The Honorable Robert Ney
Chairman
The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on House Administration
House of Representatives

The Government Printing Office (GPO) is the principal agent for federal printing. Specifically, all printing for the three branches of government—with a few exceptions—is required to be done by GPO. GPO also disseminates and sells government publications through programs managed by the Superintendent of Documents. The Superintendent disseminates government publications to the public through the depository library program and sells publications online, through 23 bookstores, and by mail order. Until recently, the dissemination and sales programs dealt mostly in paper, microfiche, or CD-ROM formats. However, advances in electronic publishing technologies and the availability of government publications on the World Wide Web are affecting paper-based dissemination and sales and are raising questions about the direction and future of the Federal Depository Library Program.

The conference report¹ for the legislative branch appropriations for 2001 required that we submit to you, by March 30, 2001, a study on electronic dissemination of government information. Specifically, we were required to

¹*Making Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2001*, Conference Report to Accompany H. R. 4577, House of Representatives, December 15, 2000.

-
- study the impact of providing documents to the public solely in electronic format and
 - assess the feasibility of transferring the depository library program to the Library of Congress.

As part of our assessment of the depository library program, we were asked to (1) identify how such a transfer might be accomplished; (2) identify measures that are necessary to ensure the success of such a transfer; (3) identify when such a transfer might optimally occur; (4) examine the functions, services, and programs of the Superintendent of Documents; (5) examine and identify administrative and infrastructure support that is provided to the Superintendent by GPO, with a view to the implications for such a transfer; and (6) examine and identify the costs, for both GPO and the Library of Congress, of such a transfer. In addition, the conference report required that we provide (1) a current inventory of publications and documents that are provided to the public and (2) the frequency with which each type of publication or document is requested for deposit at nonregional depository libraries.

To address these objectives, we analyzed GPO dissemination data and work processes, GPO and Library of Congress program and budget documents, and other documentation. We also reviewed technical literature and previous relevant studies. In addition, we interviewed GPO and Library officials, representatives of professional library associations, representatives of unions representing GPO employees, and officials from the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. Further details on our objectives, scope, and methodology are presented in appendix I.

Results in Brief

Electronic dissemination of government documents offers the opportunity to reduce the costs of dissemination and make government information more usable and accessible. However, to move to an environment in which documents are disseminated solely in electronic format, a number of challenges would need to be overcome. These challenges include ensuring that these documents are (1) authentic, (2) permanently maintained, and (3) equally accessible to all individuals. In addition, certain cost issues—including the effect of shifting printing costs to depository libraries and end users—would need to be addressed.

Regarding the feasibility of transferring the depository library program to the Library, both advantages and disadvantages are associated with such a move. In studies conducted in 1993 and 1994, the Library concluded that

the depository library program was not inconsistent with the mission and functions of the Library and that it might be appropriate for the Library to have responsibility for this program. Further, a transfer could facilitate the development of governmentwide solutions to issues surrounding the acquisition, management, and dissemination of electronic documents. In addition, three other GPO programs—closely tied to the depository library program or the Library and consistent with the Library's mission—could be considered for transfer. However, according to GPO, the Library is not an appropriate home for the depository library program because the Library's mission and operations are inconsistent with a large-scale information dissemination program. In addition, the Library studies, as well as organizations representing librarians, cited disadvantages associated with such a transfer. These disadvantages included potential negative effects on public access to information and concern about the availability of funds to maintain the current program. In addition, unions representing GPO employees raised concerns about the effect of a transfer on employee rights.

If a decision is made to transfer the depository library program, the concerns raised by library organizations and employee unions should be addressed. One option for addressing these issues is to form a joint GPO/Library transition team—which would be led by the Librarian or his designee and include representatives of the depository libraries—to develop appropriate strategies. In addition, this team could develop a detailed transition plan including a schedule and detailed cost estimates.

In commenting on a draft of this report, the Public Printer and the Librarian of Congress raised numerous concerns about its contents. Specifically, the Public Printer stated that the report does not provide a comprehensive study of the impact of providing documents solely in electronic format because it only briefly mentions such major issues as authenticity, permanent public access, security, equity of access, and cost considerations. Further, the Librarian stated that the report focuses exclusively on shifting functions from one legislative branch agency to another and not on the larger policy issues involved in providing citizens useful and persistent access to government information. In regard to these comments, we note that the conference report required us to focus our study on the impact of providing government information solely in electronic format and on various issues concerning the feasibility of transferring the depository library program to the Library. Recognizing the limited timeframe in which we were required to respond, this report appropriately raises the major issues and challenges that would need to be

addressed if the Congress decides to direct electronic dissemination of government information or a transfer of the depository library program.

As requested, we are providing, in appendix II, a current inventory of publications and documents that are provided to the public. Appendix III contains information on the frequency with which each type of publication or document is requested for deposit at nonregional depository libraries.

Background

Established in 1861, GPO is the principal agent for federal printing. All printing for the Congress, the Executive Office, and the Judiciary—except for the Supreme Court of the United States—and for every executive department, independent office, and establishment of the government is required to be done at or contracted by GPO. An agency located in the legislative branch, GPO produces the *Congressional Record*, the *Federal Register*, the *Code of Federal Regulations*, and other key government documents.

GPO, through its Superintendent of Documents, is also responsible for the acquisition, classification, dissemination, and bibliographic control of tangible and electronic government information products. Accordingly, regardless of the printing source, the law requires that federal agencies make all their publications in all formats available to the Superintendent of Documents for cataloging and distribution. The Superintendent of Documents then distributes this government information in traditional and electronic formats to the public through a system of more than 1,300 depository libraries nationwide—the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). The Superintendent of Documents also links the public to about 203,000 online government documents through its Web site, known as GPO Access. In addition, it makes about 9,000 titles available for sale via telephone, mail, fax, e-mail, online orders from publishing agency Web sites, booksellers, the GPO Online Bookstore, and GPO Bookstores.

This longstanding structure for centralized dissemination of government information is facing several challenges.

- First, government printing has evolved from a primarily in-house GPO operation to a combination of GPO-administered private printing contracts, executive branch agency contracts, and in-house printing. We have reported on this development and questioned the efficiency and

effectiveness in this environment of the centralized GPO model for government printing.²

- Second, federal agencies are increasingly disseminating information via agency Web sites, which is decreasing reliance on large-scale printing as the means to produce government documents.
- Third, the statutory mechanism for GPO printing and document distribution faces constitutional issues. Congress gave the congressional Joint Committee on Printing (JCP) broad authority to supervise government printing and distribution of government publications.³ Its regulation of executive branch printing and document distribution, however, has been viewed by the Department of Justice as being unconstitutional under the Supreme Court's 1983 "separation of power" decision in *INS v. Chadha*. In this case, 462 U.S. 919 (1983), the Supreme Court invalidated the legislative veto authority of Congress, ruling that Congress can only affect the executive branch through legislation that has been passed by both Houses and signed into law. In the years since *Chadha*, the Department of Justice and the Office of Management and Budget have several times instructed executive branch agencies that they need not comply with either statutory JCP requirements or the JCP Printing and Binding Regulations.

These challenges have impaired GPO's ability to acquire and disseminate government documents. In 1996, GPO estimated that about 50 percent of government documents published in that year were not indexed, catalogued, and distributed to the depository libraries. Documents that should be—but are not—distributed by the Superintendent of Documents to the depository libraries are known as fugitive documents. GPO asserts that these fugitive documents are increasing because of electronic dissemination of information via agency Web sites and decreasing agency compliance with the statutory requirements for printing through GPO.

Many government documents are also disseminated or sold by other components of the national information dissemination infrastructure, including the Department of Defense's Defense Technical Information Center (a major component of the Department of Defense's Scientific and Technical Information Program) and the Department of Commerce's National Technical Information Service. Increasingly, these documents are

²*Government Printing Office: Monopoly-Like Status Contributes to Inefficiency and Ineffectiveness* ([GAO/GGD-90-107](#), September 1990).

³Title 44 U.S.C. 103.

also available on agencies' Web sites and through FirstGov—a government Web site providing the public with one-stop access to online federal resources, including government publications.

Increasing use of electronic publishing and dissemination technology is also changing the FDLP itself. The Legislative Branch Appropriations Act of 1996 directed GPO to reassess the program within this context. Noting that the use of these technologies requires careful analysis, planning, and the probable restructuring of the current federal dissemination program, the act directed GPO to examine the functions and services of the FDLP, identify measures that were necessary to ensure a successful transition to a more electronically based FDLP, and prepare a strategic plan for such a transition. The resulting study⁴ and its companion strategic plan⁵ recommended a 5-year transition to a more electronic FDLP, identified a core of government publications that should continue to be distributed on paper, such as the *Code of Federal Regulations*, and established a schedule for the transition. According to this schedule, by the end of fiscal year 1998 FDLP libraries were to receive 50 percent of publications in electronic format. The program reached this objective in fiscal year 2000, when about 57 percent of FDLP titles were made available online via GPO Access.

Although the FDLP has begun to provide online access to selected government publications via GPO Access, it uses electronic information to supplement—and selectively replace—the dissemination of the same information on paper or microfiche. Thus, the number of tangible titles—on paper, microfiche, or CD-ROM—distributed to FDLP libraries since the publication of the study has remained relatively stable: from 29,372 titles distributed in fiscal year 1996 to 28,849 titles in fiscal year 2000. A similarly modest decline was evident in the number of distributed tangible copies, from 13,472,946 copies distributed in fiscal year 1996 to 12,207,064 copies in fiscal year 2000.

A major impetus for accelerating the transition to a more electronic FDLP occurred in fiscal year 2001, when the Congress reduced by \$2 million the

⁴*Study to Identify Measures Necessary for a Successful Transition to a More Electronic Federal Depository Library Program* (U.S. Government Printing Office, Publication 500.11, June 1996).

⁵*Federal Depository Library Program: Information Dissemination and Access Strategic Plan, FY 1996–2001* (U.S. Government Printing Office, June 1996).

funding for the programs managed by the Superintendent of Documents. Faced with this funding shortfall, GPO analyzed printing contracts to determine whether the publications distributed on paper or microfiche might also have online versions available. The analysis showed that 40 percent of the distributed tangible titles had online versions available.

Acting on this finding, the Superintendent has accelerated the transition of the FDLP to a primarily electronic program and issued a policy for the dissemination of publications to depository libraries.⁶ The policy restated earlier guidance articulated in an August 2000 letter from the Superintendent of Documents to the directors of depository libraries, reaffirmed the commitment to use online dissemination as the primary method of FDLP distribution, and defined the conditions under which the program will continue to distribute paper publications and other tangible products, even if the publications are available online. Specifically, the program will also distribute the paper or tangible version when any one of the following conditions is met:

- There is a legal requirement to distribute the publication in tangible format.
- The paper publication is of significant reference value to most types of FDLP libraries.
- The paper publication serves a special needs population.
- The commonly accepted medium of the user community is tangible format.
- The product is essential to the conduct of government.

With regard to the last category, the Superintendent of Documents has identified a list of “Essential Titles for Public Use in Paper Format.” Based on an initial list developed in 1996, these “essential” titles would be made available to the depository libraries in paper format, regardless of their online availability. These documents, listed in appendix VII, include such titles as the *Budget of the United States*, the *Code of Federal Regulations*, the *Congressional Record*, and the *United States Code*. We determined that 28 of the 42 titles (about 67 percent) are also available online. According to the Superintendent of Documents, maintaining the availability of these titles for selection in paper format is essential to the purpose of the FDLP.

⁶*Dissemination/Distribution Policy for the Federal Depository Library Program*, No. SOD 71 (Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, January 2, 2001).

Advances in information technologies and the Internet continue to shape the FDLP. Over the years, these advances have also triggered numerous initiatives focused on reforming and restructuring the nation's information dissemination infrastructure in general and the Office of the Superintendent of Documents in particular. These initiatives—including the recent proposal by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Sciences—are discussed in appendix VIII.

Impact of Providing Government Documents to the Public Solely in Electronic Format

Electronic dissemination of government documents offers the opportunity to reduce the costs of dissemination and make government information more usable and accessible. However, to move to an environment in which documents are disseminated solely in electronic format, a number of challenges would need to be overcome. These challenges include ensuring that these documents are (1) authentic, (2) permanently maintained, and (3) equally accessible to all individuals. In addition, cost issues should be addressed, including the effect of shifting printing costs to depository libraries and end users.

Electronic Dissemination Provides Advantages

One of the advantages of electronic dissemination is that electronic documents cost less to store, maintain, and disseminate. Electronic documents require no warehouse space and incur no shipping charges. If necessary, they may be readily updated with little further production cost. The contrast in costs between electronic and paper dissemination is illustrated by the costs associated with GPO Access in fiscal year 2000. In this period, the Superintendent of Documents distributed almost 12.2 million copies of 28,849 tangible titles to depository libraries and added 32,306 online titles to the 160,726 titles available at the end of fiscal year 1999 through GPO Access. For the 28,849 tangible titles, the reported fiscal year 2000 printing and reproduction costs were about \$13.7 million; for operating and maintaining the 193,032 online titles the reported cost was about \$3.3 million.⁷

A second advantage of electronic dissemination is that electronic documents may offer greater functionality than traditional paper documents. They can be searched, can be linked to related information, can be manipulated (allowing users to cut and paste text), and may

⁷This does not include the costs associated with the conversion of electronic files produced by the printing process into a format that allows them to be added to GPO Access.

incorporate not only images, but also audio and video. Further, electronic documents make printing on demand accessible to individuals.

A third advantage of electronic dissemination is that electronic documents make government information far more accessible to citizens, including those with physical impairments. Once posted, they are immediately accessible to thousands of users from multiple locations around the nation. Because the Web is location independent, it reduces geographic differentiation and may eliminate the need for visits to a distant depository library or GPO bookstore. Moreover, unlike their paper counterparts stored in the nation's libraries and bookstores, electronic documents are generally available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Disseminating Documents Solely in Electronic Format Poses Challenges

While the Web-based dissemination of electronic government publications provides an attractive alternative to the traditional ink-on-paper approach, a number of challenges would need to be overcome if the government were to disseminate documents solely in electronic format. These challenges include addressing (1) authentication, (2) permanence, and (3) equity of access. In addition, cost issues would need to be addressed.

Authentication provides the assurance that the electronic document is official and complete: i.e., that the document was not surreptitiously or accidentally modified. When citizens access and retrieve government documents from federal Web sites, they should have assurance that the accessed documents are authentic.

Although document authentication may be achieved through electronic signatures or seals, government documents currently available on the Web often lack authentication. Once downloaded from government Web sites, documents lacking electronic signatures or seals may be modified without detection. The FDLP is not currently using electronic signatures or other electronic means to authenticate government documents, but GPO is in the process of procuring public key infrastructure (PKI) technology⁸ to provide authentication of government publications disseminated online via GPO Access. Program officials told us that they guarantee the authenticity

⁸A PKI is a system of hardware, software, policies, and people that, when fully and properly implemented, can provide a suite of information security assurances that are important in protecting sensitive communications and transactions.

of the electronic documents available on the GPO Access Web site, although no such guarantee is posted on the Web site itself.

Permanence refers to the retention of an online document by a Web site, making it possible for users to repeatedly find or link to the document. In practice, this means that the document must be maintained online in perpetuity.

Since GPO provides FDLP libraries with access to electronic documents through GPO Access, it has assumed responsibility for their permanence. To do this, GPO uses the Online Computer Library Center's Persistent Uniform Resource Locators, which provide an effective means to update Internet addresses by redirecting users from old Internet addresses to the most recent address associated with an electronic publication.

Although the Government Printing Office Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act of 1993 directs the Superintendent of Documents to maintain an electronic directory of government information and provide online access to government documents, there is no explicit legal requirement for the Superintendent of Documents or any other federal entity to permanently maintain online electronic versions of government documents.⁹ However, GPO has advised us that it believes that it has a legal basis to maintain permanent access to electronic information.

In addition, portions of government electronic information products managed by the Superintendent of Documents in what is known as the FDLP Electronic Collection are maintained by partner institutions, including other federal agencies and depository libraries and consortia. Recognizing the risk of losing documents controlled by other agencies, FDLP is acquiring and archiving electronic documents managed by these agencies.

Equity of access recognizes that some individuals may have difficulty accessing and using electronic information. Many individuals have no access to the Internet, lack computer skills, or are unable to navigate the increasingly complex Web environment. A recent National Telecommunications and Information Administration report¹⁰ on

⁹GPO officials told us that GPO is legally responsible for the FDLP Electronic Collection under the authority of 44 U.S.C. Section 1909 and 4101.

¹⁰*Falling Through the Net: Toward Digital Inclusion* (National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Department of Commerce, October 2000).

Americans' access to the Internet notes that while the Web is becoming more and more widespread, about 60 percent of U.S. households have no access to the Internet, whether by choice, poverty, or disability. Moreover, people with disabilities are only half as likely to have access to the Internet compared to those without disabilities. Although individuals in households without Internet access may use access provided by public schools or libraries, the lack of direct access poses a barrier. Similarly, even frequent Internet users may find it difficult to search for and locate specific government documents on the Web. According to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Sciences, government Web sites are often difficult to search, with users confronted with such a massive volume of disorganized materials that they cannot easily find what they are seeking, even if they are highly computer and information literate.¹¹

In addition, while electronic documents are less costly to disseminate, GPO may face near-term cost increases associated with creating electronic documents when none exist. In 2000, the Superintendent of Documents explored the cost of a fully electronic depository library program. The study pointed out that there are no electronic versions available to the depository library program for many of the documents printed by GPO, and that the library program would have to digitize (that is, scan electronically) thousands of documents to make them suitable for online dissemination via GPO Access. The Superintendent of Documents estimated, based on 25,063 titles distributed to depository libraries between April 1999 and March 2000, that approximately 40 percent (10,000 titles) had an online counterpart, and that the remaining 60 percent (15,000 titles) would have to be converted. According to GPO, an additional \$7.7 million would have been required in fiscal year 2000 to convert to a totally electronic FDLP, bringing total program costs to \$38 million.

The depository libraries may also expect to bear additional costs if the depository library program begins to disseminate government documents solely in electronic format. These include the costs of (1) printing shelf copies of electronic documents, (2) purchasing selected printed documents no longer provided by the library program, (3) training librarians in the use of the Internet and electronic reference services, and

¹¹ *A Comprehensive Assessment of Public Information Dissemination* (U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, final report, Volume 1, January 26, 2001).

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- (4) helping library patrons to use the Internet to search and locate government publications.

This shift in costs to the end user or to libraries was also recognized by the Depository Library Council. The Council noted that although this shift is an unintended consequence of technology, libraries will struggle with different issues such as printing, formatting, and providing users with instructions on how to use online technology.¹² This point was echoed by the National Research Council in its argument that libraries must adopt a new model for library acquisitions, one that considers not only the cost of access to information, but also the cost of maintaining the technical environment—including hardware, software, and personnel—required to make these resources available to readers.¹³

Feasibility of Transfer of the Depository Library Program to the Library of Congress

Both advantages and disadvantages are associated with transferring the depository library program to the Library. In studies conducted in 1993 and 1994, the Library concluded that the depository library program is not inconsistent with the mission and functions of the Library and that it might be appropriate for the Library to have responsibility for a program established to acquire government documents and distribute them to depository libraries. Further, a transfer could allow the depository library program and the Library to develop governmentwide solutions to the common issues they face in addressing the acquisition, maintenance, and dissemination of electronic information. In addition, three other GPO programs—closely related to the depository library program or the Library and consistent with the Library's mission—could also be considered for transfer. However, the Public Printer stated that the Library is not an appropriate home for the depository library program because the Library's mission is inconsistent with a large-scale information dissemination program. In addition, the Library studies, as well as organizations representing librarians, cited disadvantages associated with such a transfer. These disadvantages included potential negative effects on public access to information and concern about the availability of funds to maintain the current program. In addition, unions representing GPO

¹²*Report on GPO's Transition to a More Electronic FDLP* (Electronic Transition Committee, Depository Library Council, Spring 2000).

¹³*LC21: A Digital Strategy for the Library of Congress*, prepublication copy (Computer Science and Telecommunications Board, National Research Council, July 26, 2000).

employees expressed concern about the effect of a transfer on employee rights.

Advantages of Transferring the Depository Library Program

According to studies conducted by the Library, the mission of the Library—to make its resources available and useful to the Congress and the American people and to sustain and preserve a universal collection of knowledge and creativity for future generations—and that of the depository library program—to ensure that the American public has access to government information by disseminating information products to libraries nationwide—are not inconsistent. The Library noted that its National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped has long experience with distributing library materials through its network of libraries for the blind and physically handicapped. Therefore, a transfer could expand the Library's current involvement in the dissemination of government information and enable consolidation of dissemination functions.

A transfer of selected programs of the Superintendent of Documents might also facilitate the depository library program and the Library working together to address the broad issues of acquiring, managing, and disseminating digital information—issues critical to both organizations. In December 2000, the Library received a special appropriation of \$100 million to lead a national strategic planning effort to develop a National Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program.¹⁴ In making this appropriation, the Congress directed the Librarian to develop a plan jointly with federal entities having expertise in telecommunications technology and electronic commerce, and with the participation of representatives of other federal, research, and private libraries and institutions having expertise in the collection and maintenance of archives of digital materials. The Library has developed a planning framework and is assembling advisory groups and forming partnerships to guide its planning for the national digital information strategy.

In addition to the depository library program, three of the six other programs managed by the Superintendent of Documents could be considered for transfer. These programs are (1) Cataloging and Indexing, (2) GPO Access, including the FDLP Electronic Collection, and (3) the

¹⁴H.R. 5666 as enacted into law by Public Law 106-554, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2001.

International Exchange Service. Two of the programs, the Cataloging and Indexing program and GPO Access, are closely related to the depository library program. Under the third program, the International Exchange Service, the Superintendent of Documents disseminates documents to foreign libraries on behalf of the Library of Congress.

The Cataloging and Indexing program is responsible for identifying and organizing government publications by title, subject, and agency, and providing this information to users through indexes, catalogs, and online retrieval systems. The Cataloging and Indexing program ensures that government publications entering FDLP dissemination are under bibliographic control.

According to Library studies, the Cataloging and Indexing program is consistent with the functions of the Library.¹⁵ The program would complement the Library's cataloging operations and centralize the cataloging of government documents in a single entity. The Library considers that information gathered through the consolidated cataloging and indexing operation would help to ensure that all government publications are reported to a central source and thus help to reduce the number of fugitive documents that escape bibliographic control.

GPO Access provides the public with access to electronic documents under the bibliographic control of the Superintendent of Documents. This program is essential to the Superintendent's commitment to provide online access to government documents.

The International Exchange Service program provides for the distribution of U.S. government publications to foreign libraries in exchange for publications produced by their governments. Foreign publications are then sent to the Library, which administers the program. As such, the program is already the responsibility of the Library and consistent with the Library's mission. In addition, integrating the international exchange program into the Library's ongoing domestic and international information

¹⁵Deputy Librarian of Congress, *Government Information Dissemination and Printing Improvement Act of 1993 (Title XIV of H.R. 3400): An Analysis of Its Possible Impact on the Library of Congress With Regard to the Transfer of Specific Functions of the Superintendent of Documents* (Library of Congress, November 9, 1993), and *The Government Information Dissemination and Printing Improvement Act of 1993: Analysis of Its Possible Impact on the Library of Congress With Regard to the Transfer of Specific Functions of the Superintendent of Documents* (Library of Congress, January 26, 1994).

exchange programs would allow the Library to consolidate responsibilities for the administration and distribution of all federal documents. The Library’s Office of the Director of Acquisitions, which currently administers the Library’s portion of the program, could assume complete responsibility for the international exchange program.

Disadvantages of Transferring the Depository Library Program

Both the Library studies and organizations representing the interests of libraries and librarians—including the American Library Association and its Government Documents Roundtable—identified disadvantages associated with a potential transfer. The following are some of the more significant disadvantages identified.

- The library community does not believe that a transfer would enhance and promote the public’s no-fee access to government information.
- The Library expressed concern about the availability of funds to maintain the products and services available to depository libraries, much less support new products and services.
- According to the library community, a transfer would signal to executive agencies, which contribute thousands of tangible information products to the FDLP, that their publications are no longer needed. This would lead to the loss of thousands of publications that would no longer be accessible to the public. Efforts to retrieve and convert these documents after the fact would be logistically and financially prohibitive.
- The library community stated that disengaging the dissemination functions of the depository library program from the printing functions of GPO may destroy the only gateway available to minimize the number of fugitive documents. Similarly, the Library noted that this separation would have a major impact on both the depository library program and the international exchange service by making it more difficult and costly to ensure that materials Congress intended for these programs were actually distributed.
- The library community noted that a transfer of GPO’s Cataloging and Indexing program to the Library would likely result in a loss of quality, speed, and detail in cataloging.
- The transfer would add a significant level of bureaucracy and would result in increased costs in providing the transferred services, a loss of productivity, and disassembly of a cohesive program, according to the library community.

With regard to the missions of the depository library program and the Library, Library studies indicated that the missions of the depository library program and the Library are “not inconsistent,” but also cautioned that administering the depository library program would considerably

expand the Library's mission. On the other hand, the Public Printer stated that the mission and operations of the Library are inconsistent with a large-scale information dissemination program such as the depository library program. He further stated that transferring the depository library program to the Library would increase costs, impose additional burdens on the Library, and not result in any improvement in the public's ability to access government information. In addition, the library community took the view that the missions of the Library and the federal depository library program vary so significantly that the appropriateness of a transfer is questionable. The library community also noted that the mission of the Library would have to be expanded to accommodate the needs of government information users.

Unions Representing GPO Employees Have Concerns

The unions representing employees—the American Federation of Government Employees and the Graphics Communication International Union—expressed concern that a transfer might negatively affect annuities and seniority for all transferred employees and pay for blue-collar workers. Further, without specific enabling legislation, they maintain, unionized employees transferred to the Library would lose bargaining rights over wages.

Other Issues Affecting a Potential Transfer

As previously noted, we were also asked to assess other issues affecting a potential transfer of the depository library program. If a decision is made to transfer the program, transition planning would be critical to determining how and when such a transfer should occur. One option would be to form a joint GPO/Library transition team which could include representation from the depository libraries. This team could further study and resolve critical issues cited by the library community and unions. This team could develop a detailed transition plan and schedule, cost estimates, and performance measures and identify data and system migration requirements.

Regarding measures that could help ensure the success of a transfer, we identified the following:

- Ensure that issues raised by the library community are appropriately addressed, including the effects of a transfer on the number of fugitive documents, and the effect on the cataloging and indexing function.
- Address seniority, salary rates, and bargaining rights of union members transferred to the Library.

-
- Consider limiting the physical movement of staff and equipment during the transition period. Staff and equipment of the Superintendent of Documents units responsible for managing the programs transferred to the Library of Congress could continue to occupy their current office space at the GPO site. The Library could pay GPO for support services, including rent, building maintenance, and communications services.
 - During the transition period, consider continuing to rely on the information systems and computer support provided by GPO's Office of Information Resources Management to the Superintendent of Documents offices and programs transferred to the Library.

The transition could take place after the detailed transition planning mentioned previously is completed. In addition, it may be advisable to begin the transition at the start of the fiscal year to coincide with budgetary actions.

Appendices IV, V, and VI provide requested information on the functions, services, and programs of the Superintendent of Documents and on the administrative and infrastructure support that is provided to the Superintendent by GPO.

With regard to the potential cost of transferring the depository library program, we identified the program infrastructure costs for GPO and the Library as the most likely to be affected. Infrastructure services include administrative services such as payroll processing; rents, communications, and utilities; and information system support. The Superintendent of Documents currently pays GPO for these infrastructure costs.

It appears that the program costs may remain stable, unless the Library or GPO makes changes in their scope or work processes. Of the seven programs managed by the Superintendent of Documents, four could be transferred to the Library and might be expected to continue to operate using existing processes, equipment, and staff. Three of the seven programs—By-Law Distribution, Sales of Publications, and Agency Distribution Services—are expected to remain at GPO.

The costs for administrative services may also remain stable. As the Library assumed the management of the transferred units, it would also begin to provide various administrative services, such as personnel and payroll, previously provided by GPO. We assume that the Library would continue to pay for these services from the Superintendent's Salaries and Expenses appropriations, and that the Library's overhead rate for these services is comparable to GPO's. In fiscal year 2000, the Superintendent of

Documents expenses for administrative services and support provided by GPO were about \$4.7 million.

Similarly, we expect that the cost for rents, communications, and utilities would remain stable if there were no physical movement of staff or equipment. Staff and equipment of the Superintendent of Documents units responsible for managing the programs transferred to the Library of Congress could continue to occupy their current office space at GPO. The Library could then pay GPO at the current rate for rent, building maintenance, and communications services. In fiscal year 2000, the Superintendent of Documents expenses for the rents, communications, and utilities provided by GPO were about \$7.3 million.

The cost of information system support might increase during the transition period, largely because the transferred units and programs would continue to pay GPO for continuing information system support while migrating to the Library's systems. In fiscal year 2000, the Superintendent of Documents expenses for information systems support provided by GPO were about \$3.5 million.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided a draft of this report for review and comment to the Public Printer and the Librarian of Congress. Their comments are reprinted in appendixes IX and X, respectively.

In a letter dated March 21, 2001, the Public Printer raised numerous issues concerning the contents of the draft report. First, he stated that the report does not provide a comprehensive study of the impact of providing documents solely in electronic format. He stated that the report only briefly mentions such major issues as authenticity, permanent public access, security, equity of access, and cost considerations, and does not address how these issues will be resolved in an all-electronic information environment. Second, he stated that the Library is not an appropriate home for the federal depository library program, as the Library's mission is inconsistent with a large-scale dissemination program. Finally, he states that the draft report lacks balance in the presentation of information from prior GAO audits because we did not include a discussion of a more recent study of GPO management.

With regard to electronic dissemination, the conference report required us to study the impact of providing government information solely in electronic format, among other issues, and provide a report by March 30, 2001. Recognizing this limited timeframe, our report appropriately raises

the major issues and challenges that would need to be addressed to move to an environment in which government documents are disseminated solely in electronic format. Resolving these challenges, however, is well beyond the scope of what we were asked to do and is instead the responsibility of federal agencies that disseminate information, including GPO. With regard to the transfer of the depository library program, we have revised the report to reflect GPO's position that the mission of the depository library program is inconsistent with that of the Library. With regard to the comment on balance, our 1990 report is mentioned briefly in the report's background because of its discussion of issues relating to the structure of GPO. We did not mention the Booz-Allen & Hamilton report cited by GPO because it dealt primarily with the management of GPO—an issue not addressed by this report.

In a letter dated March 21, 2001, the Librarian of Congress also raised numerous issues concerning the draft report. First, the Librarian stated that sufficient analysis has not been done to support our recommendation that an Interagency Transition Team be established to plan the transfer of the depository library program, particularly in light of the recent mandate from the Congress that designated the Library the lead agency in developing the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program. The Librarian also stated that the report focuses exclusively on shifting functions from one legislative branch agency to another and not on the larger policy issues involved in providing citizens useful and persistent access to government information.

With regard to the Librarian's comment concerning the recommendation in the draft report, we would like to clarify that the report contains neither conclusions nor recommendations. Our discussion of a transition team is offered only as one possible option for facilitating a transition, if the Congress decides to direct such a transfer. With regard to the focus of the report, we again note that the conference report specifically required us to study issues related to the feasibility of transferring the depository library program to the Library. Therefore, our report properly identifies the major issues that would need to be addressed if the Congress directs such a transfer. However, we recognize that the larger policy issues raised by the Librarian are valid. Therefore, we look forward to seeing the results of the Library's efforts to study the dissemination of electronic government information as well as its strategy for dealing with the life cycle of digital information.

The Public Printer also stated in his comments that the draft report contained numerous factual inaccuracies and misinterpretations. We

subsequently received specific technical comments, which we have incorporated into the report as appropriate. Appendix IX also includes more specific responses to the Public Printer's comments. The Librarian also provided technical comments that we have incorporated as appropriate.

We are sending copies of this letter to Senator Ted Stevens, Senator Robert C. Byrd, Senator Robert F. Bennett, Senator Richard J. Durbin, Senator Fred Thompson, Senator Joseph I. Lieberman, Senator Pete V. Domenici, Senator Kent Conrad, Representative C. W. (Bill) Young, Representative David R. Obey, Representative Charles H. Taylor, Representative James P. Moran, Representative Dan Burton, Representative Henry A. Waxman, Representative Jim Nussle, and Representative John M. Spratt, in their capacities as Chair, Ranking Member, or Ranking Minority Member of Senate and House Committees and Subcommittees, and to other interested parties. Copies will also be available on our Web site at www.gao.gov.

Please contact me at (202) 512-6240 if you or your staff have any questions. I can also be reached by e-mail at koontz@gao.gov. Key contributors to this report were Timothy E. Case, Barbara S. Collier, Mirko J. Dolak, Jackson W. Hufnagle, William N. Isrin, and George L. Jones.



Linda D. Koontz
Director, Information Management Issues

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

This report responds to the requirements in the conference report¹ for the legislative branch appropriations for 2001 that we

- study the impact of providing documents to the public solely in electronic format and
- assess the feasibility of transferring the depository library program to the Library of Congress.

As part of our assessment of the depository library program, we were asked to (1) identify how such a transfer might be accomplished; (2) identify when such a transfer might optimally occur; (3) examine the functions, services, and programs of the Superintendent of Documents; (4) examine and identify administrative and infrastructure support that is provided to the Superintendent by GPO, with a view to the implications for such a transfer; (5) examine and identify the costs, for both GPO and the Library of Congress, of such a transfer; and (6) identify measures that are necessary to ensure the success of such a transfer. In addition, the conference report required that we provide (1) a current inventory of publications and documents that are provided to the public and (2) the frequency with which each type of publication or document is requested for deposit at nonregional depository libraries.

To assess the impact of providing government documents solely in electronic format, we reviewed technical literature and studies, analyzed the Superintendent's workload and publication dissemination data, and reviewed the workload and performance of the GPO Access Web site. In addition, we interviewed the Superintendent's personnel, depository librarians, members of the American Library Association² and of the Association of Research Libraries,³ and a representative of the American

¹H.R. 106-796, July 27, 2000.

²The American Library Association is a not-for-profit educational organization of over 60,000 members. Its mission is to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services.

³The Association of Research Libraries is a not-for-profit membership organization comprising 120 leading research libraries in North America.

Association of Law Libraries⁴ to obtain their views on the feasibility and impact of distributing government documents solely in electronic format.

To develop a current inventory of publications and documents provided by the Superintendent of Documents to the public, we focused on the sales inventory because GPO does not maintain an inventory of publications distributed to the depository libraries. We analyzed GPO's fiscal year 2000 publication inventory and sales data. We also interviewed the Superintendent's personnel responsible for preparing cyclical and annual inventories to obtain information on warehousing locations and on the disposal of excess publications.

To obtain information on the frequency with which each type of publication or document is requested for deposit at nonregional depository libraries, we obtained and analyzed data from the 1999 *Biennial Survey of Federal Depository Libraries*.

In assessing the feasibility, cost, and the timing of transfer of the depository library program to the Library of Congress, we reviewed GPO and Library of Congress program and budget documents, legislative proposals, and studies that examined the feasibility of the transfer of the Superintendent of Documents functions and staff to the Library of Congress. In addition, we interviewed GPO and Library of Congress managers and staff, members of selected professional library associations, the representatives of the two unions representing unionized employees of the Superintendent of Documents, and the executive director of the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science to obtain their views on this issue.

We performed our work at GPO and Library of Congress headquarters in Washington, D.C., from October 2000 through March 2001 in accordance

⁴The American Association of Law Libraries is a not-for-profit membership organization with over 5,000 members. The Association represents law librarians and related professionals who are affiliated with law firms, law schools, corporate legal departments, courts, and local, state, and federal government agencies.

**Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and
Methodology**

with generally accepted government auditing standards. While we did not assess the reliability of GPO-supplied data, we worked with GPO officials to verify fiscal year 2000 budget, personnel, and production data.

Appendix II: Current Inventory of GPO Sales Publications and Documents Provided to the Public

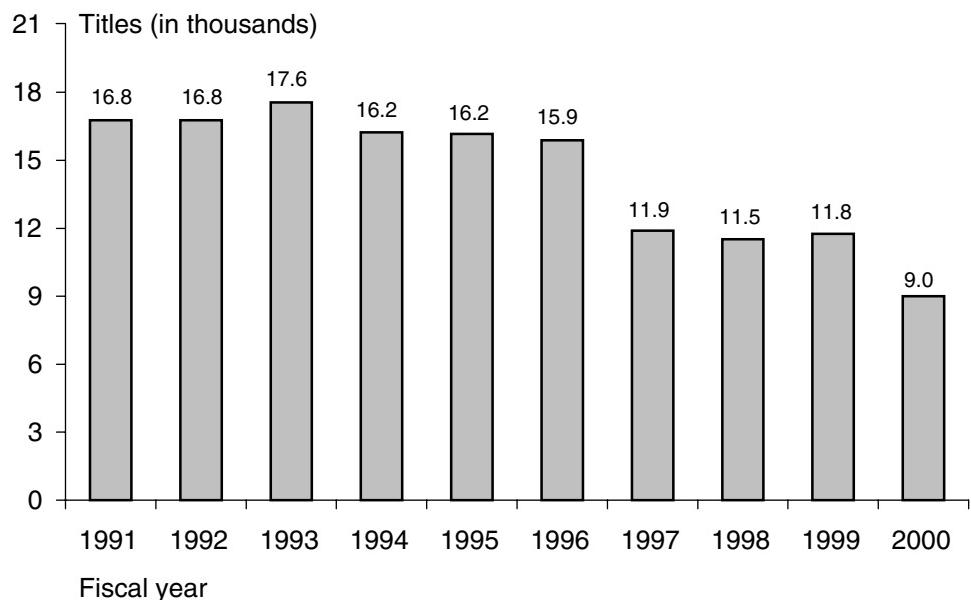
GPO makes publications available to the public through the FDLP and the sales program. Under the FDLP, GPO disseminates thousands of publications—about 28,000 in fiscal year 2000—to over 1,300 depository libraries each year. The depository libraries maintain these publications as part of their collections and make them available, free of charge, to the public. GPO does not, however, maintain centralized information on publications that have been distributed to the depository libraries, and as a result, we are unable to provide a current inventory of these publications. (See appendix V for more detailed information on the FDLP.) Under its sales program, GPO sells documents to the public by mail and telephone order, through its bookstores located around the country, and through its Online Bookstore on GPO Access. GPO maintains information on its inventory of publications offered for sale.

GPO's program to sell government publications is managed by the Superintendent of Documents' Documents Sales Service. In fiscal year 2000, the Service made approximately 9,000 titles of government documents (figure 1) available to the public for sale. The Service maintains a large inventory of these documents—about 5.2 million copies in fiscal year 2000, with a retail value of \$74 million (figures 2 and 3).

The number of titles available for sale and the inventory maintained by the Service has dropped substantially over the last decade. From fiscal years 1991 to 2000, the number of titles dropped by 7,759, a reduction of 46 percent, and the number of copies in the inventory fell by about 4.8 million copies, a drop of 48 percent.

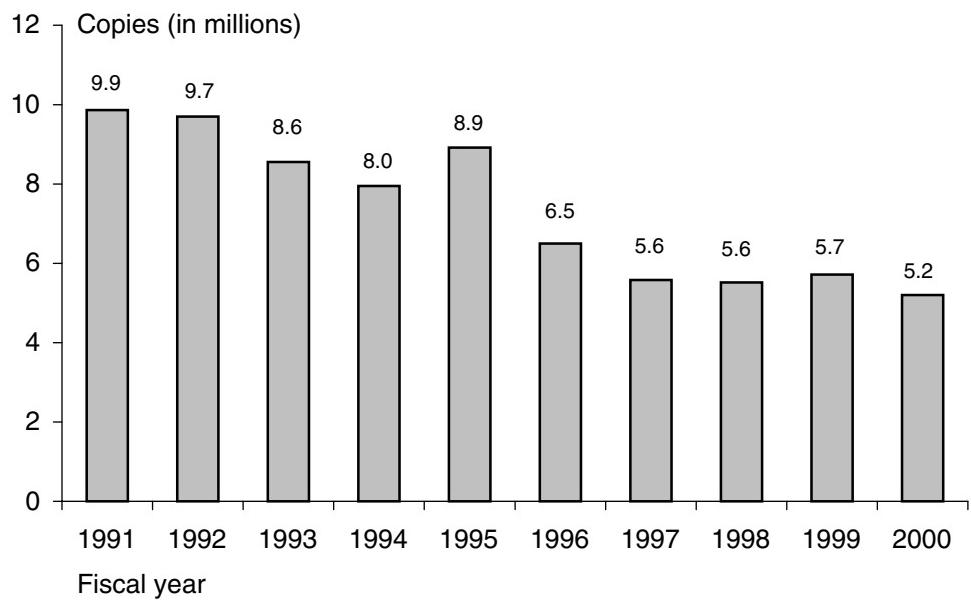
Appendix II: Current Inventory of GPO Sales Publications and Documents Provided to the Public

Figure 1: Number of Available Titles for Sale, Fiscal Years 1991–2000



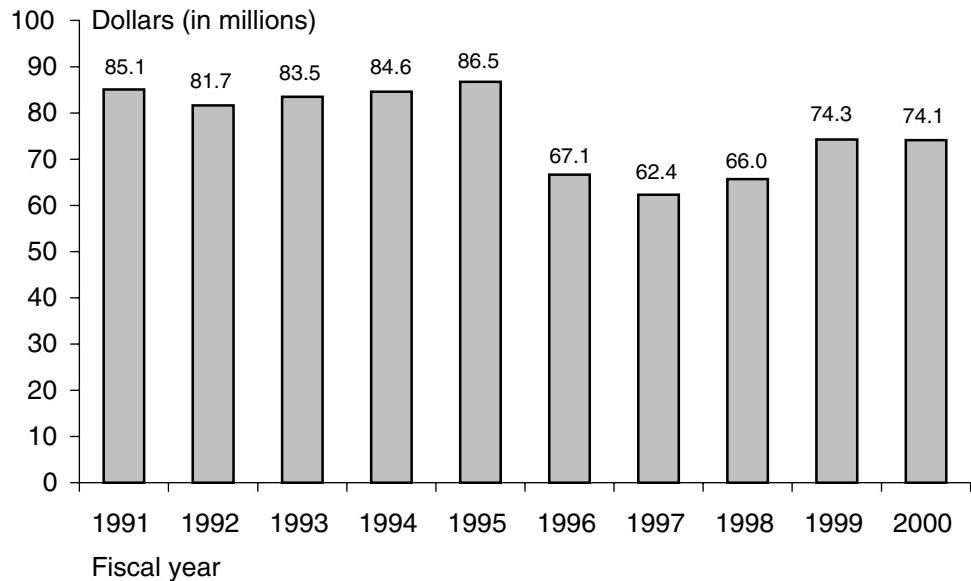
Source: GPO.

Figure 2: Number of Copies in Inventory, Fiscal Years 1991–2000



Source: GPO.

Figure 3: Retail Value of Inventory, Fiscal Years 1991–2000

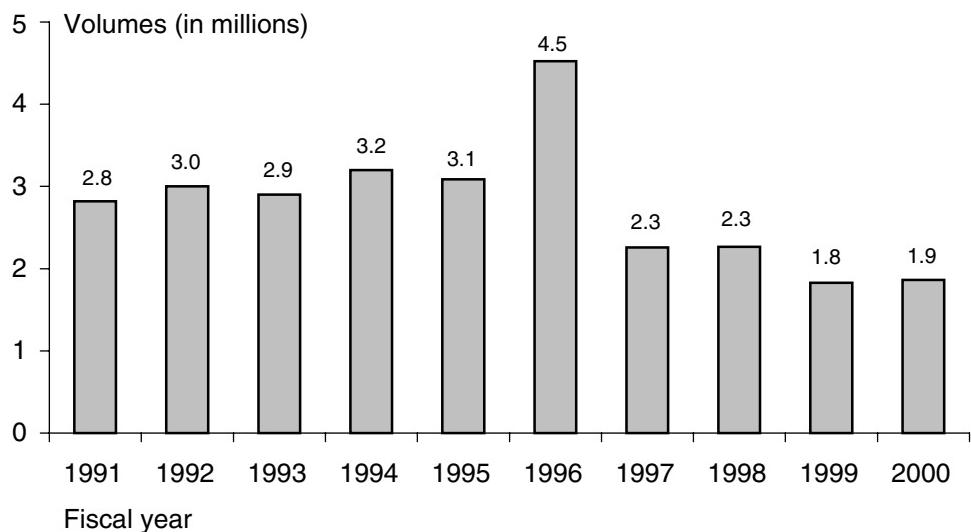


Source: GPO.

The retail value of the inventory—which in fiscal year 2000 totaled \$74.1 million—has had periods of both stability and fluctuation since 1995. Although the value of the inventory was relatively stable from 1991 to 1995, it lost almost 30 percent of its value, or \$25 million, from 1995 to 1996. This dramatic drop in the value of the inventory, according to GPO officials, is closely associated with the large number of unsold documents destroyed by the Service in fiscal year 1996. Every year, the Service destroys, as required by law, a substantial number of unsold or superseded documents. In fiscal year 2000, it destroyed 1.9 million documents (figure 4) with a retail value of \$22.3 million (figure 5). According to GPO, the actual cost of the destroyed publications was only \$2.8 million—a fraction of their stated retail value of \$22.3 million.

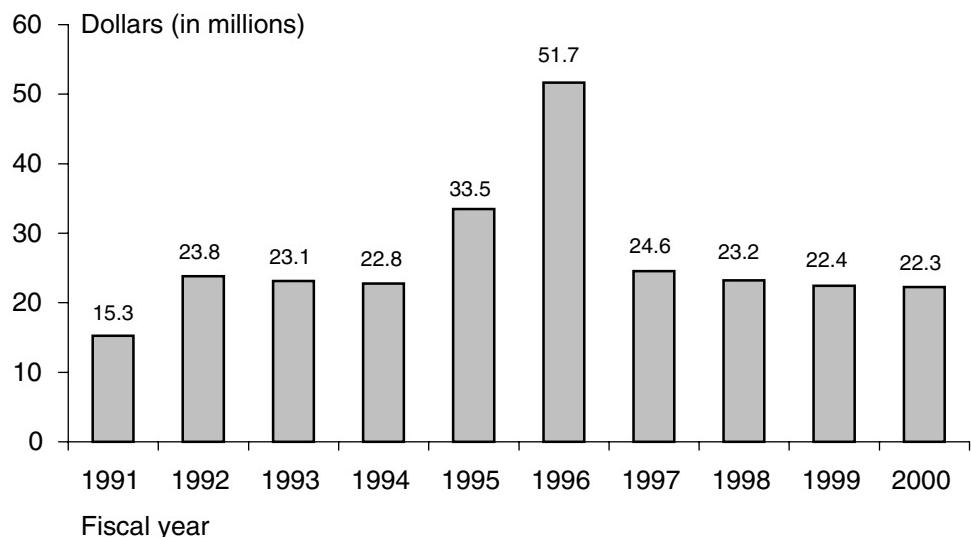
**Appendix II: Current Inventory of GPO Sales
Publications and Documents Provided to the
Public**

Figure 4: Number of Destroyed Volumes, Fiscal Years 1991–2000



Source: GPO.

Figure 5: Retail Value of Destroyed Volumes, Fiscal Years 1991–2000



Source: GPO.

Appendix III: Documents Requested for Deposit by Nonregional Depository Libraries

The Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) is a national network of depository libraries designed to ensure free public access to government information. In fiscal year 2000, the program included 1,328 libraries.

Participating libraries must maintain government publications as part of their existing collections and are responsible for ensuring that the public has free access to the deposited documents.

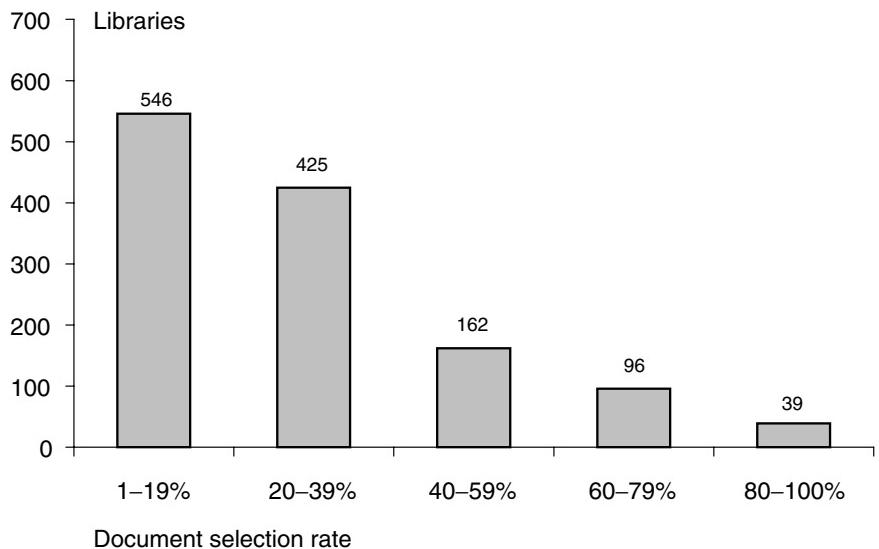
Fifty-three libraries are designated regional depository libraries, with a goal of each state having at least one regional library. Regional libraries receive all materials distributed through the FDLP and are required to retain all received government documents in perpetuity, although they may withdraw superseded publications from their collections. The remaining 1,275 nonregional libraries may select what materials to receive and have limited retention responsibilities.

We relied on information on library document selection rates reported in the 1999 *Biennial Survey of Depository Libraries* conducted by the Library Programs Service.

As figure 6 shows, 971 (77 percent) of the 1,286 nonregional depository libraries participating in the survey reported that they were selecting less than 40 percent of the items¹ offered by the FDLP, and only 135 (10 percent) reported selection rates over 60 percent.

¹An item represents a series or group of related publications issued by a specific federal agency and available for selection by depository libraries from GPO.

Figure 6: Document Selection Rates by Nonregional Depository Libraries

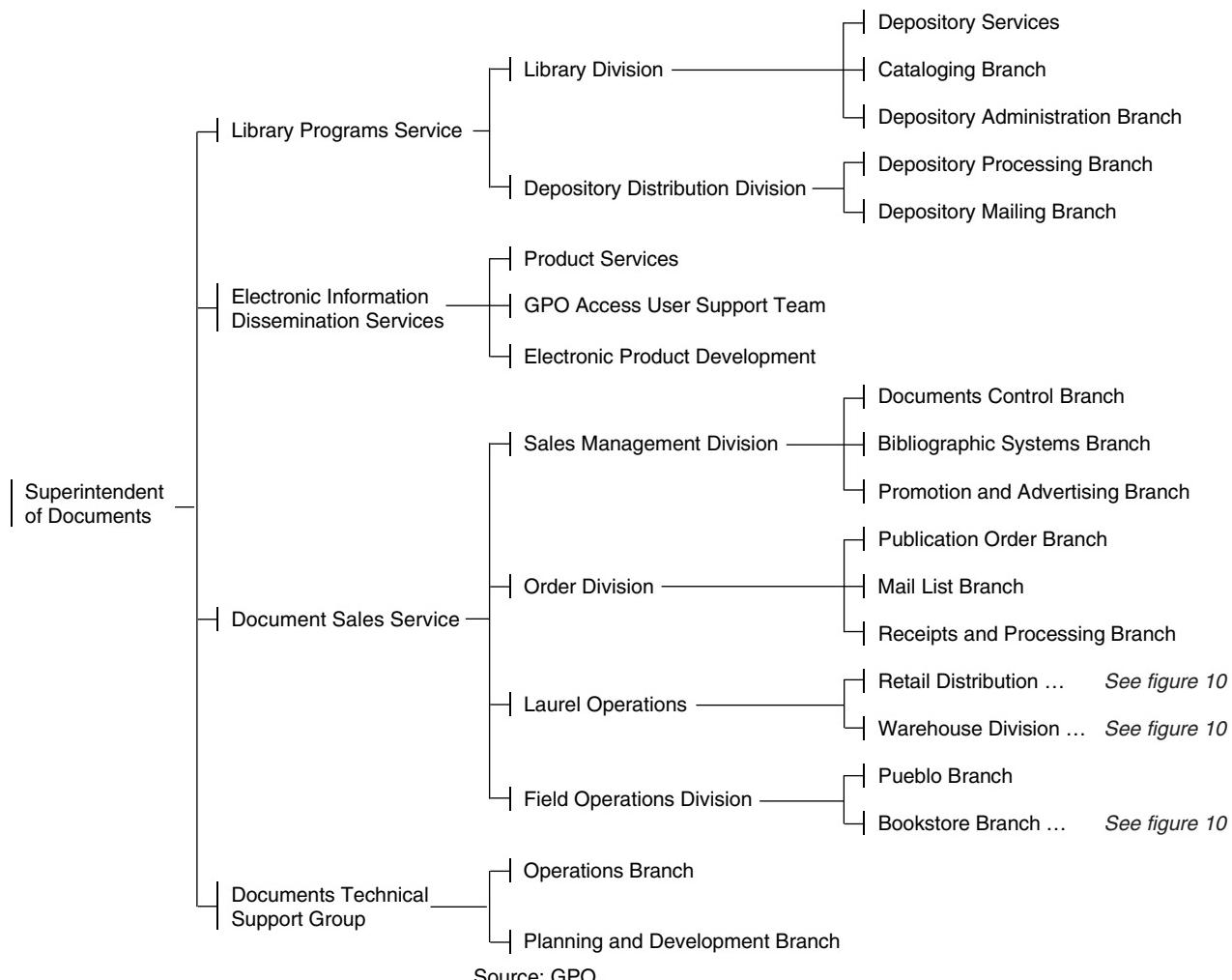


Source: FDLP 1999 Biennial Survey.

Appendix IV: Organization, Staffing, Expenditures, and Functions of the Superintendent of Documents

The Office of the Superintendent of Documents is organized into four units (figure 7): (1) the Library Programs Service, (2) Electronic Information Dissemination Services, (3) the Documents Sales Service, and (4) the Documents Technical Support Group. The four units manage seven major programs (see appendix V).

Figure 7: The Superintendent of Documents Organization



Source: GPO.

Staffing

In fiscal year 2000 the Superintendent of Documents operations were supported by 597 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, with 450 employees—about 75 percent—working in the Documents Sales Service. The Service is responsible for publication sales and for the Agency and By-

Law Distribution Programs. It operates phone, fax, and electronic order services in Washington, D.C., and Pueblo, Colorado, and retails publications through consignment agents and GPO bookstores.

The next largest Superintendent of Documents unit—the Library Programs Service—has 106 employees, or about 18 percent of the total of 597 (table 1). The Service manages and operates the Cataloging and Indexing program, the Federal Depository Library Program, and the International Exchange Service.

The remaining two units—Electronic Information Dissemination Services and the Documents Technical Support Group—employ 22 and 17 people, respectively, or less than 6 percent of the 597 positions. The Office of Electronic Information Dissemination Services assists federal agencies in electronic dissemination, supports the sales program and the sale of electronic products, and provides strategic planning and customer support for GPO Access. It relies largely on GPO's Production Department for the development, operation, and maintenance of GPO Access. Finally, the Documents Technical Support Group provides management support and services to the Superintendent of Documents.

Union Representation

GPO recognizes 16 labor unions, and two of these represent Superintendent of Documents employees: the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and the Graphics Communications International Union (GCIU). Superintendent of Documents employees represented by AFGE belong to one of two locals: AFGE-PCJC or Local 3392. Under the provisions of the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations statute, GPO deals with unions on all personnel policies, practices, and matters affecting working conditions other than wages. Wages are negotiated under the provisions of section 305 of Title 44, known as the Kiess Act. The three locals represent 402 positions of the Superintendent of Documents, or about three fourths of all Superintendent of Documents employees (table 1).

Table 1: Office of the Superintendent of Documents FTE^a Allocations by Organization and Positions Represented by Unions, Fiscal Year 2000

Organization	FTEs	Represented positions
Superintendent of Documents	3	2
Library Programs Service	106	93
Electronic Information Dissemination Services	22	14

Organization	FTEs	Represented positions
Documents Sales Service	450	278
Documents Technical Support Group	17	15
Total	597	402

^aFTEs are annualized FTE usage. FTE numbers do not add correctly because of rounding errors.

Source: GPO.

AFGE was founded in 1932 and is the largest federal employee union, representing over 600,000 federal and District of Columbia government workers nationwide and overseas. GCIU, a product of a series of mergers among predecessor craft unions, was established in 1983. AFGE-represented staff employed by the Superintendent of Documents include librarians, program analysts, writer-editors, office automation specialists, publication management specialists, marketing research analysts, supply technicians, customer accounts technicians, and inventory management specialists. GCIU-represented staff employed by the Superintendent of Documents include warehouse workers, materials handlers, stock handlers, motor vehicle operators, and printing plant workers.

Among the three locals, AFGE-PCJC represents about three-fourths of all represented positions at the Superintendent of Documents (294). AFGE-3392 and GCIU members represent 9 percent (35 positions) and 18 percent (73 positions), respectively, of total union representation at the Superintendent of Documents.

Staff Location and Retirement Eligibility

According to GPO, in February 2001 the Superintendent of Documents employed 569 people in various locations. As shown in table 2, about 44 percent of the 569 employees are eligible for retirement (109 employees) or early retirement (139). The largest group of employees (156) eligible for retirement or early retirement is found in Washington, D.C., followed by 56 employees in Laurel, Maryland, 18 employees in Pueblo, Colorado, and 18 employees in bookstores around the country. Table 3 shows GPO-reported employee retirement eligibility by grade.

Table 2: Retirement Eligibility Status of Superintendent of Documents Employees by Location

Retirement eligibility status	Washington	Laurel	Pueblo	Bookstore locations	Total
Eligible for retirement	59	37	6	7	109
Eligible for early retirement	97	19	12	11	139

**Appendix IV: Organization, Staffing,
Expenditures, and Functions of the
Superintendent of Documents**

Retirement eligibility status	Washington	Laurel	Pueblo	Bookstore locations	Total
Not eligible for retirement	196	41	30	49	316
Not eligible for federal retirement	0	2	0	3	5
Total	352	99	48	70	569

Source: GPO.

Table 3: Retirement Eligibility Status of Superintendent of Documents Employees by Grade and Pay Plan

Grade	Pay plan	Eligible for early retirement	Eligible for retirement	Not eligible for retirement	Temporary employees not eligible for federal retirement	Total
00 ^a	WG ^b	2	2	5	0	9
00	PG ^c	0	0	1	0	1
01	WG	0	0	2	0	2
03	WG	3	12	2	0	17
03	PG	0	0	1	0	1
04	WG	4	1	17	0	22
04	PG	0	2	5	3	10
05	WG	9	7	8	0	24
05	PG	16	18	78	2	114
05	WS ^d	0	0	1	0	1
06	WG	1	3	6	0	10
06	PG	30	13	60	0	103
07	WG	0	0	2	0	2
07	PG	13	9	26	0	48
08	PG	10	5	4	0	19
09	WG	0	1	0	0	1
09	PG	19	15	42	0	76
10	PG	3	0	1	0	4
11	PG	11	12	21	0	44
12	PG	11	7	20	0	38
13	PG	2	1	11	0	14
14	PG	4	1	2	0	7
15	PG	1	0	1	0	2
Total		139	109	316	5	569

^a00 Administratively established grade for wage rate (WG) supervisory plant workers

^bWG All wage grade workers are covered by the Kiess Act

^cPG Printing office grade similar to General Schedule (GS) grades in the executive branch

^dWS Supervisory wage grade employee

Source: GPO.

Expenditures

Table 4 shows expenditures for the major organizational units of the Superintendent of Documents in fiscal year 2000. According to GPO, the Superintendent of Documents spent \$92.8 million in fiscal year 2000. The Documents Sales Service (DSS) accounted for 62 percent of the Superintendent of Documents fiscal year 2000 expenditures; DSS and the Library Programs Service (LPS) combined account for 90 percent of expenditures.

Table 4: Office of the Superintendent of Documents Expenditures by Organization, Fiscal Year 2000

Object classification	Office of the Superintendent of Documents	Library Programs Service	Electronic Information Dissemination Services	Documents Sales Service	Documents Technical Support Group	Totals
Total personnel compensation and benefits	\$3,633,052 ^a	\$7,798,163	\$1,284,012	\$23,442,862	\$1,114,999	\$37,273,088
Travel and transportation	9,243	2,034,570	22,703	3,092,265	2,219	5,161,000
Rents, communications, and utilities	334,341	645,278	224,322	5,920,961	166,246	7,291,148
Printing and reproduction	—	13,467,020	—	381,980	—	13,849,000
Other contractual services	120,359	509,847	118,306	1,326,950	13,538	2,089,000
Materials and supplies	140,522	425,274	336,638	1,241,282	18,284	2,162,000
Depreciation and amortization	372,627	169,117	204,866	282,390	—	1,029,000
Information technology	—	702,301	1,134,923	1,636,688	—	3,473,912
Cost of publications sold	—	—	—	12,887,528	—	12,887,528
General sales postage	—	—	—	4,804,852	—	4,804,852
Surplus publications expense	—	—	—	2,789,707	—	2,789,707
Total expenses	\$4,610,144	\$25,751,570	\$3,325,770	\$57,807,465	\$1,315,286	\$92,810,235

^aIncludes allocated costs.

Source: GPO.

Tables 5 and 6 show the fiscal year 2000 expenditures for the seven major programs conducted by the Office of the Superintendent of Documents. According to GPO, the Salaries and Expense (S&E) appropriation provides funds for labor and related expenses for five of the Office's seven programs (table 5): (1) Cataloging and Indexing, (2) the Federal Depository Library Program, (3) GPO Access, (4) By-Law Distribution, and

(5) the International Exchange Service. The remaining two programs—Agency Distribution Services and Sales of Publications—are funded from the GPO Revolving Fund (table 6). In addition to these two programs, the Revolving Fund finances the printing and binding operations managed by the Public Printer.

As shown in table 5, most of the Superintendent of Documents S&E appropriations were allocated to the Federal Depository Library Program, with expenditures of almost \$26 million, or about 87 percent of the fiscal year 2000 S&E appropriations. The Cataloging and Indexing program expended about \$2.7 million, or about 9 percent of the S&E appropriations, while the By-Law Distribution Program and the International Exchange Service spent about \$529,000 and \$687,000, respectively.

Table 5: Office of the Superintendent of Documents S&E Expenditures by Program, Fiscal Year 2000

Program	FY 2000 expenditures (\$K)
Cataloging and Indexing	\$2,737
Federal Depository Library Program (includes GPO Access)	25,919
By-Law Distribution Program	529
International Exchange Service	687
Total	\$29,872

Source: GPO.

According to GPO, Sales of Publications and the Agency Distribution Services Program are funded through GPO's Revolving Fund (table 6). Expenses as they occur are drawn from the Revolving Fund, and revenues from sales and agency transfers replenish it. In fiscal year 2000, sales expenses were about \$57.7 million and sales revenues were \$45.5 million, resulting in a net deficit to the Revolving Fund of about \$12.2 million. The Agency Distribution Services Program generated a surplus in fiscal year 2000 of about \$85,000 on expenses of approximately \$5.1 million and revenues of approximately \$5.2 million.

Table 6: Office of the Superintendent of Documents Revolving Fund Expenses and Receipts by Program, Fiscal Year 2000

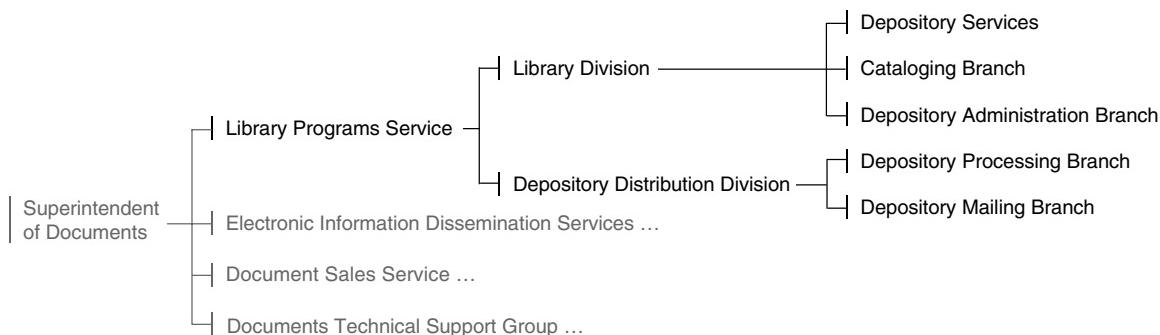
Program	FY 2000 expenses (\$K)	FY 2000 revenue (\$K)	Profit (loss) (\$K)
Sales of Publications	\$57,697	\$45,479	(\$12,218)
Agency Distribution Services Program	\$5,130	\$5,215	\$85

Source: GPO.

Library Programs Service

The Library Programs Service, with 106 employees, is the second largest of the Superintendent of Documents' major units. As shown in figure 8, the Library Programs Service is made up of two major units, the Library Division and the Depository Distribution Division, which are further subdivided.

Figure 8: Library Programs Service Organization



Source: GPO.

Functions

The Library Programs Service administers the Federal Depository Library Program and the Cataloging and Indexing program, and manages the distribution component of the International Exchange Service for the Library of Congress. Historically, these programs have been carried out through seven basic functions: distribution/dissemination, bibliographic control of government information products in all formats, acquisition, classification, format conversion, the inspection of depository libraries; and the continuing education and training of depository library personnel. The electronic information environment has created an eighth function, that of preservation of electronic government information for permanent

public access. This is done through the management of the FDLP Electronic Collection.

Expenditures

According to GPO, the Library Programs Service expended about \$26 million in fiscal year 2000 (table 7). Printing and reproduction costs were over \$13 million, which accounted for over 50 percent of its fiscal year 2000 budget. Compensation and benefits accounted for about \$8 million (30 percent) of the unit's fiscal year 2000 budget.

Table 7: Library Programs Service Expenditures, Fiscal Year 2000

Account	FY 2000 expenditures
Total personnel compensation and benefits	\$7,798,163
Travel and transportation	2,034,570
Rents, communications, and utilities	645,278
Printing and reproduction	13,467,020
Other contractual services	509,847
Materials and supplies	425,274
Depreciation and amortization	169,117
Information technology	702,301
Total	\$25,751,570

Source: GPO.

Library Division

The Library Division is responsible for managing Depository Services, the Cataloging Branch, and the Depository Administration Branch.

Depository Services. Depository Services designates new depository libraries, inspects participating libraries, administers self-studies, provides continuing education and training, and produces administrative publications. Its staff is responsible for relations with the federal depository libraries. Individual depository libraries are inspected for compliance with the requirements of 44 U.S.C. Chapter 19, by means of on-site visits. The staff also manages the designation of new depository libraries and terminates libraries upon their request or for cause, and reviews the depository libraries' self-studies to determine if on-site visits are warranted. It also investigates and acts to resolve complaints about services in participating libraries.

The Depository Services staff also develops and administers the *Biennial Survey of Depository Libraries* and manages the continuing education components of the FDLP. This function consists primarily of arranging the annual Federal Depository Library Conference. The Services staff oversees

the Library Programs Service's administrative publishing effort, including the publication of the *Administrative Notes* newsletter, the conference proceedings, and the depository library *Manual and Guidelines*.

Cataloging Branch. The Cataloging Branch provides descriptive and subject cataloging (i.e., library-standard descriptions of content and other attributes) for a wide range of government publications in all formats and media. These bibliographic records contain numerous data elements, including author, title, publishing agency, date, Superintendent of Documents class number, etc. The cataloging records are entered into the OCLC (Online Computer Library Center, Inc.) system via the Internet. The principal outputs of the Branch are the cataloging records themselves, which are distributed in machine-readable format via the Library of Congress' Cataloging Distribution Service, the online *Catalog of U.S. Government Publications* on GPO Access, and the printed *Monthly Catalog*. The Branch also searches the Web to discover electronic documents that federal agencies have not provided to the FDLP.

Depository Administration Branch. The Depository Administration Branch manages document acquisition, maintains shipping lists, tracks fugitive publications, develops item selection lists, acts as the documents distribution agent to the foreign libraries in the International Exchange Service program, and maintains the GPO Classification Manual and List of Classes.

Depository Distribution Division

The Depository Distribution Division manages both the Federal Depository Library and the International Exchange Service distribution programs through the physical receipt, storage, handling, and mailing of tangible government publications. The Division uses the Automated Depository Distribution System (ADDS) to guide the physical distribution of publications to depository libraries. The Division also coordinates, negotiates, and manages interagency agreements—primarily for products such as maps—as well as standby contracting and delivery carrier contracts to support distribution programs. In fiscal year 2000, the Division distributed an average of 102,500 copies weekly through the depository library program and about 6,900 copies weekly through the International Exchange Service program.

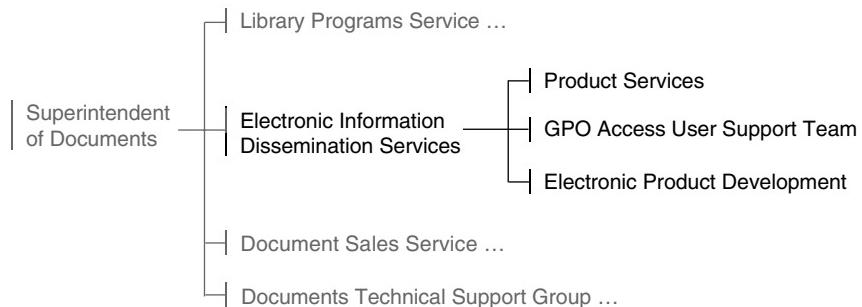
Depository Processing Branch. The Depository Processing Branch uses ADDS to perform the physical distribution of publications to depository libraries.

Depository Mailing Branch. The Depository Mailing Branch is responsible for packaging, weighing, and shipping materials sent through the Federal Depository Library and International Exchange Service programs. This Branch also processes claims for nonreceipt of publications from the participating depository libraries.

Electronic Information Dissemination Services

The Office of Electronic Information Dissemination Services (EIDS) employs 22 workers and is made up of three units (figure 9): Product Services, the GPO Access User Support Team, and the Electronic Product Development Team.

Figure 9: Office of Electronic Information Dissemination Services Organization



Source: GPO.

Functions

EIDS is responsible for assisting federal agencies in disseminating their electronic government publications through the Superintendent of Documents. The Office works with the GPO Production Department in all stages of development, from the creation, implementation, and maintenance of electronic products to their final sale through GPO Access, including customer support and training. This function includes advising agencies of alternative dissemination platforms and helping them define their requirements for electronic dissemination.

The Office also performs strategic planning for the GPO Access program and establishes the program's policies, procedures, and budget. The GPO Access Internet servers and Web sites are operated and maintained by staff of the GPO Production Department.

Expenditures

According to GPO, EIDS expended about \$3.3 million in FY2000 (table 8). About \$1.3 million, or 39 percent, of the EIDS budget went for compensation and benefits. Over \$1.1 million of FY2000 expenditures were

for information technology—including the operations and maintenance of GPO Access—provided on a reimbursable basis by GPO's Production Department.

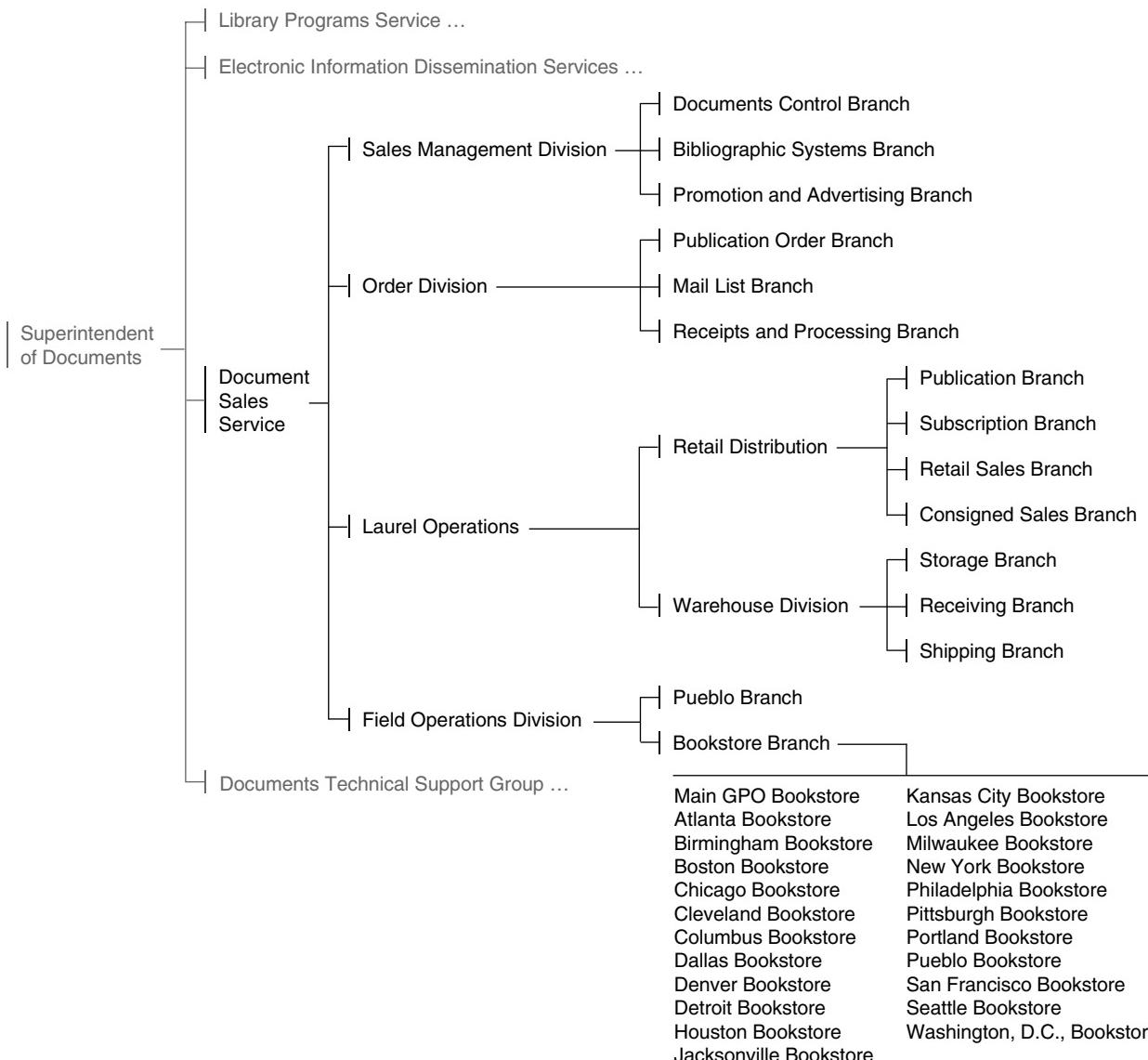
**Table 8: Office of Electronic Information Dissemination Services Expenditures,
Fiscal Year 2000**

Account	FY 2000 expenditures
Total personnel compensation and benefits	\$1,284,012
Travel and transportation	22,703
Rents, communications, and utilities	224,322
Other contractual services	118,306
Materials and supplies	336,638
Depreciation and amortization	204,866
Information technology	1,134,923
Total	\$3,325,770

Source: GPO.

Product Services	The Product Services group manages the Web content of GPO Access and develops GPO Access participation and training programs, promotional materials, training guides, and operational manuals. The group also manages the Federal Bulletin Board and administers the U.S. Fax Watch System. Fax Watch is a free fax-on-demand service that provides information on the products and services available from the Superintendent of Documents.
GPO Access User Support Team	The GPO Access User Support Team provides support to GPO Access users. The Team also supports electronic product sales and users of GPO's U.S. Government Online Bookstore.
Electronic Product Development Team	The Electronic Product Development Team develops new electronic products for federal agencies and develops proposals to meet agency electronic publishing needs.
Documents Sales Service	The Documents Sales Service includes four major units (figure 10): the Sales Management Division, the Order Division, the Field Operations Division, and Laurel Operations, which includes the Warehouse Division and Retail Distribution. The Documents Sales Service (DSS) is the Superintendent of Documents' largest entity, with 450 (about 75 percent) of its 597 employees.

Figure 10: Documents Sales Service Organization



Source: GPO.

Functions

The Documents Sales Service purchases, warehouses, announces, and distributes government documents in agreement with Titles I and 44 of the U.S. Code. Functions performed by this group include providing subscription services for government publications and selling single publications. The Service operates phone, mail, fax, and electronic order services at the central office in Washington, D.C., and in Pueblo. It also

sells publications through government consigned sales agents and GPO bookstores, and provides By-Law and Agency Distribution Services for Congress, the General Services Administration, and other federal agencies. Products may be ordered in person at GPO Bookstores, via e-mail, mail, or through the GPO Online Bookstore.

Funding and Expenditures

The Documents Sales Service is funded through GPO's Revolving Fund. According to GPO, in fiscal year 2000, DSS expended about \$58 million (table 9). About \$23 million—41 percent—of DSS expenditures in the same year went for personnel compensation and benefits. Almost \$13 million of DSS' expenses were for the cost of publications sold.

Table 9: Documents Sales Service Expenditures, Fiscal Year 2000

Account	FY 2000 expenditures
Total personnel compensation and benefits	\$23,442,862
Travel and transportation	3,092,265
Rents, communications, and utilities	5,920,961
Printing and reproduction	381,980
Other contractual services	1,326,950
Materials and supplies	1,241,282
Depreciation and amortization	282,390
Information technology	1,636,688
Cost of publications sold	12,887,528
General sales postage	4,804,852
Surplus publications expense	2,789,707
Total	\$57,807,465

Source: GPO.

Sales Management Division

The Sales Management Division is responsible for product acquisition, pricing, inventory management, outreach to federal agency publishers, market research, customer surveys, and product promotion and advertising. The Division also maintains and updates bibliographical information and catalogs documents. The Division is made up of three units (see figure 10): the Documents Control Branch, the Bibliographic Systems Branch, and the Promotion and Advertising Branch. It employs 56 workers.

Documents Control Branch. The Documents Control Branch selects and purchases information products for sale and provides inventory management of sales products.

Bibliographic Systems Branch. The Bibliographic Systems Branch creates, updates, and maintains bibliographic information for the Sales of Publications Program. This information is used to create the sales product catalog and other products to identify materials for sale.

Promotion and Advertising Branch. The Promotion and Advertising Branch provides promotional and advertising services in support of all Superintendent of Documents programs.

Order Division

The Order Division manages the clerical processes in the fulfillment of requests for sales publications and subscriptions, deals with congressional sales correspondence and inquiries, maintains sales information, processes customer complaints, and establishes book dealer and reseller accounts. The Division is made up of three units (see figure 10): the Publication Order Branch, the Mail List Branch, and the Receipts and Processing Branch. The Order Division had 145 employees in fiscal year 2000.

Publication Order Branch. The Publication Order Branch receives telephone inquiries and orders via the Order Desk and handles mail inquiries and publication customer complaints.

Mail List Branch. The Mail List Branch processes requests for subscription services, maintains various mailing lists (including reimbursable mailing lists, standing order customer lists, and marketing lists), and responds to subscription customer complaints.

Receipts and Processing Branch. The Receipts and Processing Branch opens and organizes mail and manages various accounts, including deposit accounts, government accounts, bookstore transaction accounts, and consigned sales agent accounts. The Branch also handles customer refunds.

Laurel Operations

The Laurel Operations unit employs 105 personnel and is made up of two divisions (see figure 10): the Retail Distribution Division and the Warehouse Division. The Retail Distribution Division supports processing of sales and federal agency reimbursable customer orders, while the Warehouse Division is responsible for receiving and shipping. The Laurel Operations unit is housed in two buildings, but in a recent GPO cost-savings reorganization, it relinquished 23,563 square feet to storage of paper.

The Laurel Operations unit provides oversight of the Retail Distribution and Warehouse Divisions, including the operation of the Receiving, Storage, and Shipping Branches. Specifically, Laurel Operations

- ensures that all stock received in the Laurel complex conforms to contract specifications,
- manages bulk orders, addition or removal of items from bulk storage, and bulk quantities of all sales, By-Law Distribution, and reimbursable stock,
- deals with procedural issues regarding the shipping control and shipping operation sections, including shipment of outgoing orders,
- prepares and maintains government bills of lading,
- manages the pickup and delivery of materials in the Laurel complex by GPO truck drivers, and
- processes subscriptions and mails subscription and nonsubscription items.

Retail Distribution Division

The Retail Distribution Division is responsible for the processing of sales and federal agency reimbursable customer orders. The Division employs 72 people. The functions of its branches are given in table 10.

Table 10: Functions of Branches of Retail Distribution Division

Branch	Function
Publications Branch	Processes and ships sales customer orders
Subscription Branch	Processes and ships subscription items to customers
Retail Sales Branch	Stocks and sells selected products to the public
Consigned Sales Branch	Responsible for the Agency Distribution Services Program; processes orders or distributes agency copies on a reimbursable basis

Warehouse Division

The Warehouse Division is responsible for receiving, storing, and shipping publications purchased by the Superintendent of Documents for its Sales of Publications program. Its branches perform receiving, storage, and shipping activities for both the Sales and Consigned Publications Programs (see table 11). It employs 30 staff.

Table 11: Functions of Branches of Warehouse Division

Branch	Function
Storage Branch	Stores product stock and supplies in bulk storage and performs pulls and distributions from bulk storage
Receiving Branch	Responsible for the receipt of all product stock, supplies, and returned mail delivered to the Laurel Distribution Complex (LDC); performs the initial distribution of items within LDC
Shipping Branch	Responsible for shipping bulk orders via transportation carriers; uses a fleet of trucks to pick up and deliver items to customers and Congress

Field Operations Division

The Field Operations Division oversees 23 bookstores nationwide, providing local access to government information. The Division runs the Sales Agent Program, which allows federal agencies to sell publications on behalf of GPO, and operates the Public Documents Distribution Center at Pueblo, Colorado. The Division employs 139 personnel, 46 in the Pueblo Branch and 93 in the Bookstore Branch. Table 12 gives details of the branch functions.

Table 12: Functions of Branches of Field Operations Division

Branch	Function
Pueblo Branch	Operates the Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, which distributes publications listed in the Consumer Information Catalog; provides custom mail processing, provides inventory and distribution services for Center, and manages publication sales.
Bookstore Branch	Operates 23 GPO bookstores (figure 10)

Documents Technical Support Group

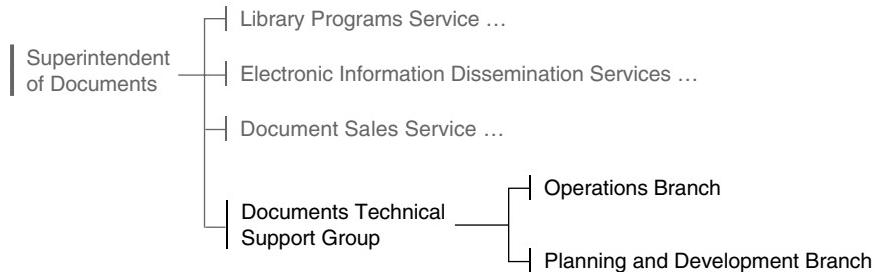
The Documents Technical Support Group has two branches (figure 11): the Operations Branch and the Planning and Development Branch. The Group, with 17 employees, is the smallest of the four Superintendent of Documents operating units.

Functions

The Documents Technical Support Group provides management and support services for Superintendent of Documents programs. Functions performed by this group include defining requirements for automated systems and working with other Superintendent of Documents units on implementation, as well as conducting annual, cyclical, and special inventory projects. The Group is also responsible for control of the quality assurance, policy and procedures, and forms management programs, and serves as a liaison with Personnel Services and Financial Management Services on personnel programs, payroll, and budgetary matters. It

provides management and support services essential to the successful operation of Superintendent of Documents programs.

Figure 11: Documents Technical Support Group Organization



Source: GPO.

Expenditures

Documents Technical Support Group expenditures (table 13) were the smallest of the Superintendent of Documents' operating units. According to GPO, in FY2000, the Group expended about \$1.3 million. About 85 percent of its expenditures were for personnel compensation and benefits; most of the remaining expenditures were for rents, communications, and utilities.

Table 13: Documents Technical Support Group Expenditures, Fiscal Year 2000

Account	FY 2000 expenditures
Total personnel compensation and benefits	\$1,114,999
Travel and transportation	2,219
Rents, communications, and utilities	166,246
Printing and reproduction	—
Other contractual services	13,538
Materials and supplies	18,284
Total	\$1,315,286

Source: GPO.

Planning and Development Branch

The Planning and Development Branch serves as the central coordination point for Superintendent of Documents-wide plans and programs, manages automated data processing (ADP) systems development for the Superintendent of Documents organization, serves as coordination point with the GPO Office of Information Resources Management and outside information system contractors, and reviews all information system requests to assure compatibility and consistency with overall data automation goals and objectives.

Operations Branch

The Operations Branch serves as the central coordination and control point for Superintendent of Documents activities that cross organizational and functional lines; manages the Documents Reports, Forms, Policies and Procedures, Directives, Property, Space Utilization, and Quality Assurance programs; and is responsible for Superintendent of Documents automated annual and cyclical inventory programs.

Appendix V: Programs of the Superintendent of Documents

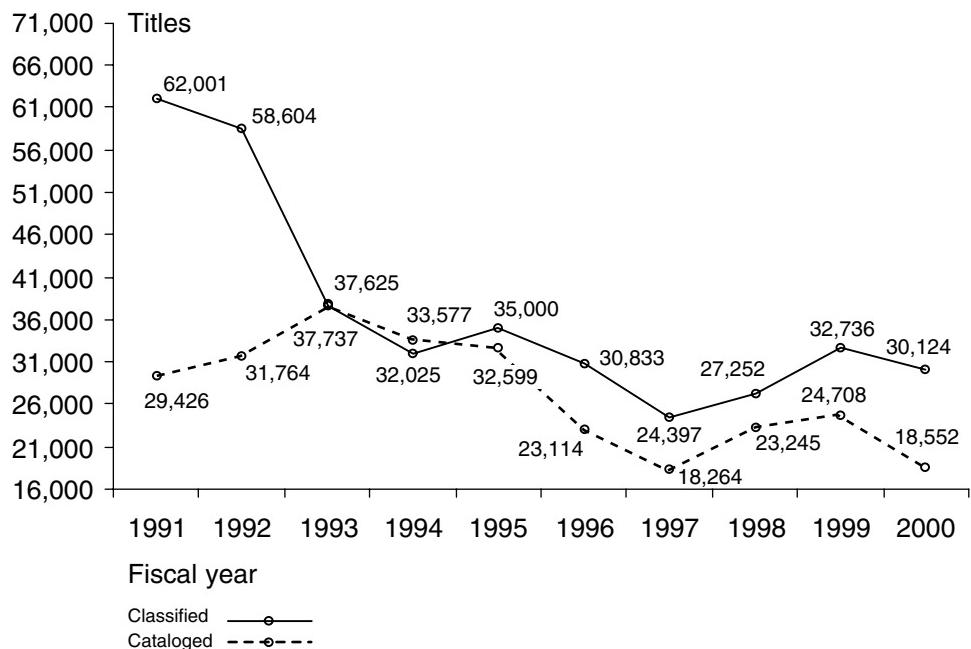
The Superintendent of Documents manages seven major programs: (1) Cataloging and Indexing of federal documents, (2) the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), which is responsible for distributing federal documents to over 1,300 participating libraries, (3) GPO Access, (4) the International Exchange Service (IES), which provides for the distribution of government publications to foreign libraries in exchange for publications produced by their governments, (5) the By-Law Distribution Program, focused on the distribution of government printed materials as directed by law, (6) the Sales of Publications program, with 23 bookstores as well as telephone and mail-order sales operations, and (7) the Agency Distribution Services Program, which mails, at the request of agencies and members of Congress, certain publications specified by law.

Cataloging and Indexing Program

Cataloging and indexing are the tools used by the Superintendent of Documents to identify and organize government publications by title, subject, and agency, and provide this information to users through indexes, catalogs, and online retrieval systems. The Cataloging and Indexing Branch of the Library Programs Service manages the Cataloging and Indexing program with assistance from the staff of the Depository Administration Branch, who assign the Superintendent of Documents classification number to government publications. The Cataloging Branch publishes—under the legal authority of Title 44 U.S.C. 1710 and 1711—the *Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications* (MOCAT). MOCAT is made up of bibliographical records of government publications in tangible and electronic media published by all three branches of the government. The program maintains an online version of MOCAT called the *Catalog of Government Publications* (CGP). Records are added to the CGP daily, with about 22,000 records added annually. The CGP provides links from bibliographic citations to electronic documents.

The Cataloging Branch also produces the *U.S. Congressional Serial Set Catalog*, establishes and maintains cataloging guidelines and policies, corrects catalog records, and prepares machine-readable cataloging records for the Online Computer Library Center, Inc. (OCLC) system. In fiscal year 2000, 30,124 titles were classified by the Depository Administration Branch, and 18,552 titles were cataloged by the Cataloging Branch (figure 12). This work was performed by 23 staff members at a cost of \$2.7 million.

Figure 12: Number of Titles Classified and Cataloged, Fiscal Years 1991–2000



Source: GPO.

As shown in figure 12, the cataloging and indexing workload has steadily decreased from fiscal year 1991, when the Branch classified 62,000 titles and cataloged 29,000 titles, to fiscal year 2000, with 30,000 titles classified and 19,000 cataloged. The program is dependent on the Internet and the OCLC systems for the production of bibliographic records. Once created, the records are provided to GPO mainframe systems supporting various programs managed by the Superintendent of Documents.

Federal Depository Library Program

The depository library program is a national network of depository libraries¹ designed to ensure free public access to government information. One of the largest Superintendent of Documents programs, it focuses on

¹A depository library is an existing public, governmental, or college library designated, in accordance with certain criteria (44 U.S.C. 1909), to receive for deposit in its collections, without charge, certain federal publications, which it selects from offerings that are available for this purpose from the Superintendent of Documents. In return, the depositories pledge to provide free access to all depository library users. Federal publications received by the regional depository libraries must be retained permanently.

the acquisition and distribution of depository materials and the coordination of over 1,300 federal depository libraries in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories.

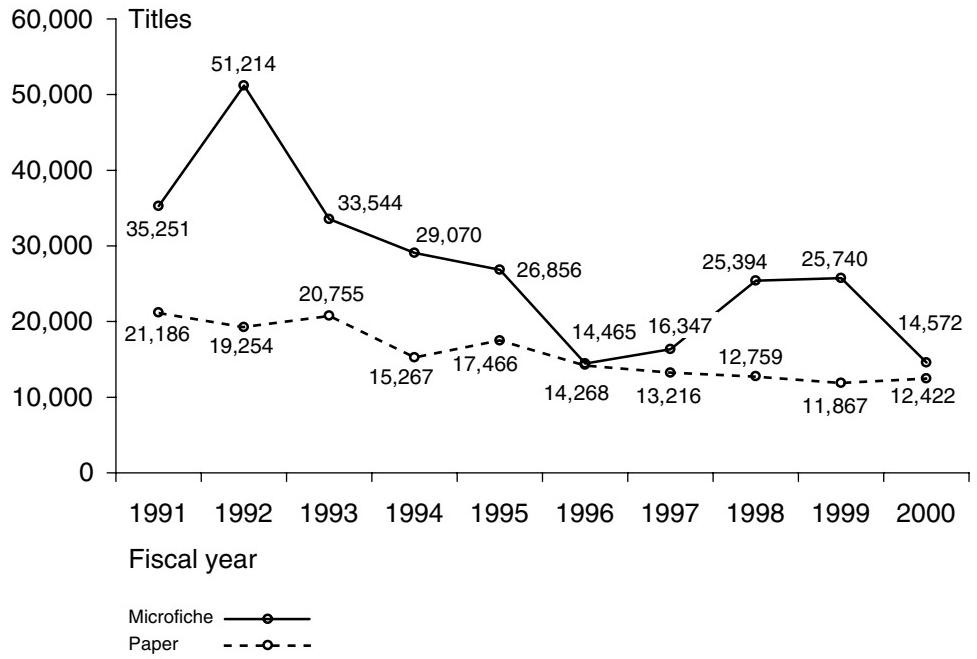
Libraries that have been designated federal depositories maintain these information products as part of their existing collections and are responsible for ensuring that the public has free access to the material provided by the FDLP. Fifty-three of these libraries are designated regional libraries. Regional libraries receive all materials distributed through the FDLP and are required to retain all received government documents in perpetuity, although they may withdraw superseded publications from their collections. An advisory group representing the library and information community—the Depository Library Council—assists GPO in identifying and evaluating alternatives for improving public access to government information through the program. Established in 1972, the 15-member Council is structured to provide the Public Printer with a diverse range of opinion and expertise.

The Library Division is responsible for managing the Cataloging Branch, the Depository Administration Branch, and Depository Services.

The Depository Distribution Division manages the distribution programs of both the Federal Depository Library and the International Exchange Service through the physical receipt, storage, handling, and mailing of tangible government publications. The Division also coordinates, negotiates, and manages interagency agreements, as well as stand-by contracting and delivery carrier contracts to support distribution programs. In fiscal year 2000, it distributed 27,761 tangible titles, including 12,422 paper titles, 14,572 microfiche titles, and 617 electronic titles.

As shown in figure 13, the volume of titles in paper and microfiche formats distributed to the participating libraries declined significantly during the last decade. The distribution of paper titles shrank by 8,714 titles, from 21,186 titles in fiscal year 1991 to 12,472 titles in fiscal year 2000. During the same period, the distribution of microfiche titles shrank by 20,679 titles, from 35,251 in fiscal year 1991 to 14,572 titles in fiscal year 2000.

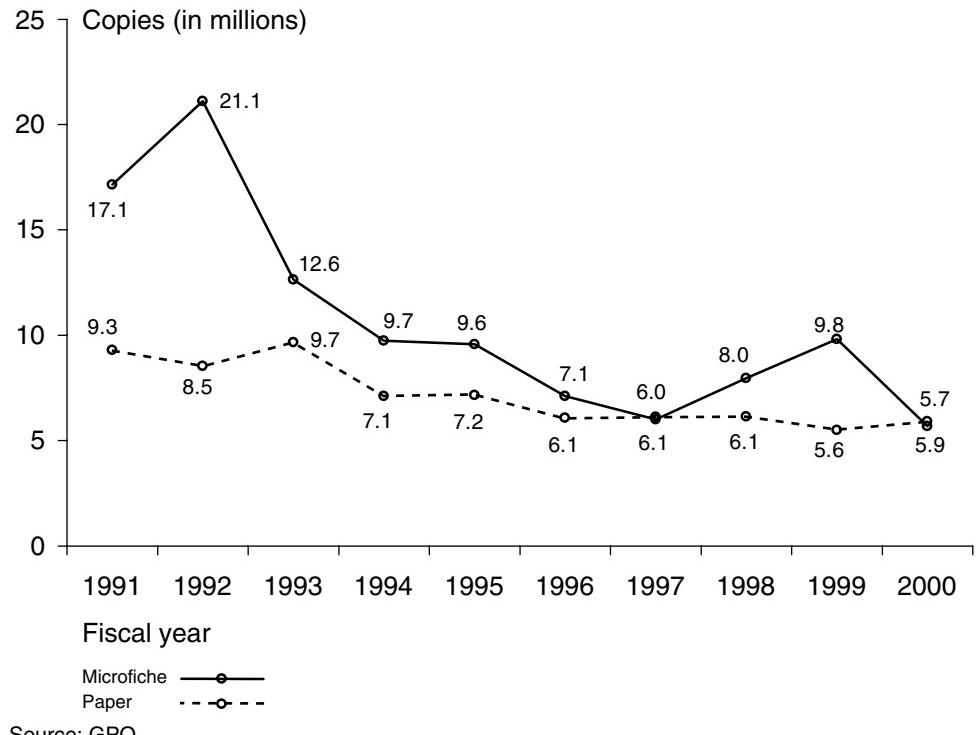
**Figure 13: Number of Paper and Microfiche Titles Distributed to Depository
Libraries, Fiscal Years 1991–2000**



Source: GPO.

The decline in the number of distributed titles was reflected in the decline in the number of distributed copies. As shown in figure 14, the volume of distributed paper copies distributed during the last decade declined by 3,379,000 copies, from 9,303,000 copies in fiscal year 1991 to 5,924,000 copies in fiscal year 2000. An even larger decline was experienced in the number of distributed microfiche copies, which declined during the same period by 11,088,000 copies, from 17,141,000 copies in fiscal year 1991 to 6,053,000 copies in fiscal year 2000.

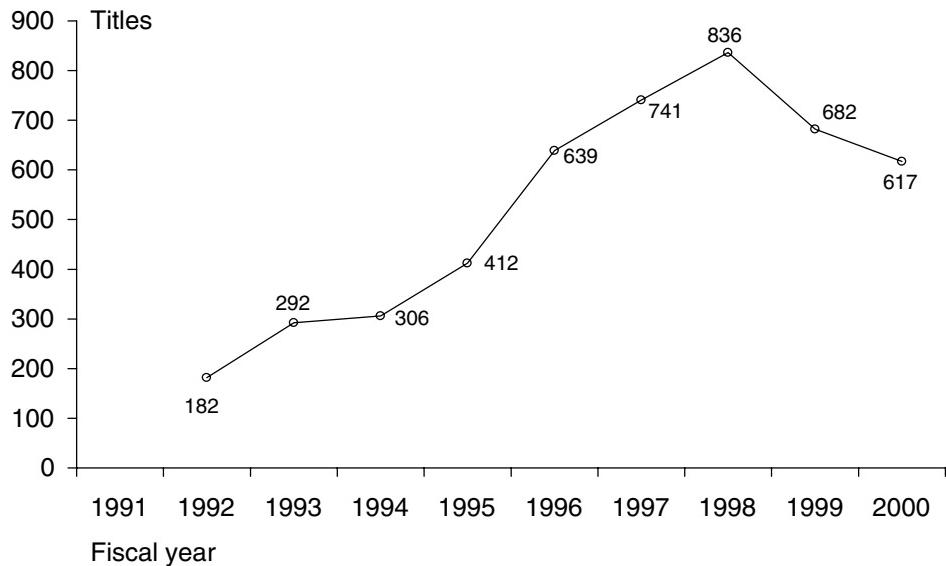
**Figure 14: Number of Paper and Microfiche Copies Distributed to Depository
Libraries, Fiscal Years 1991–2000**



Source: GPO.

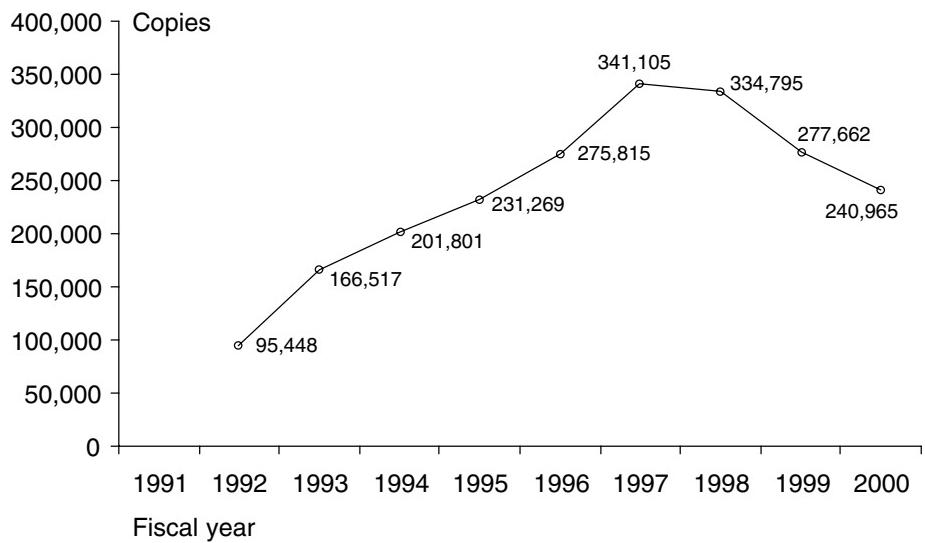
As shown in figures 15 and 16, a similar decline was experienced in the distribution of electronic titles and copies—including CD-ROMs, DVDs, and diskettes. Although the volume of the distributed electronic titles initially increased between fiscal years 1992 and 1998, it declined during the last two years, from 836 titles in fiscal year 1998 to 617 titles in fiscal year 2000. Similarly, there was a decline in the number of distributed copies, from the peak of 341,105 copies distributed in fiscal year 1997 to 240,965 copies distributed in fiscal year 2000.

Figure 15: Number of Electronic Titles Distributed to Depository Libraries, Fiscal Years 1991–2000



Source: GPO.

Figure 16: Number of Electronic Copies Distributed to Depository Libraries, Fiscal Years 1991–2000



Source: GPO.

GPO Access and the FDLP Electronic Collection

GPO Access is the principal mechanism used by the Superintendent of Documents for the electronic dissemination of government documents to the public. Established by Public Law 103-40, the Government Printing Office Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act of 1993, GPO Access offers free Web-based access to information from all three branches of the federal government. The act requires that the Superintendent of Documents (1) maintain an electronic directory of federal electronic information, (2) provide a system of online access, and (3) operate an electronic storage facility. In addition, Senate Report 103-27 incorporated the Federal Bulletin Board as the fourth component of GPO Access. The Federal Bulletin Board is a free electronic bulletin board service of the Superintendent of Documents, enabling agencies to provide the public with self-service access to federal information in electronic form. The Bulletin Board is a component of GPO Access, providing utility and support files for use with online, searchable databases on GPO Access.

GPO Access also provides other Internet-related services on a reimbursable basis to other federal agencies. These services include hosting of 16 federal agency Web sites and 32 agency databases of Government Information Locator Service (GILS)² records.

GPO Access fulfilled approximately 17 million document retrievals per month, with a total of more than 203 million retrievals in fiscal year 2000. Three documents—the *Code of Federal Regulations*, the *Federal Register*, and the *Commerce Business Daily*—accounted for over 172 million retrievals (85 percent of all the documents retrieved during this period).

A major part of the GPO Access site supporting the Superintendent of Documents programs is the FDLP Electronic Collection. The collection is made up of (1) core legislative and regulatory documents residing permanently on GPO Access, (2) other remotely accessible documents maintained either by GPO or by other institutions with which GPO has established formal agreements, (3) remotely accessible documents that GPO identifies and links to but that remain under the control of the originating agencies, and (4) tangible electronic products, such as CD-ROMs, distributed to depository libraries. In addition, GPO Access

²GILS is an effort to identify, locate, and describe publicly available federal information resources, including electronic information resources. GILS records identify public information resources within the federal government, describe the information available in these resources, and assist in obtaining the information.

provides access to Library Programs Service information pertaining to the FDLP.

The Office of Electronic Information Dissemination Services (EIDS), a unit of the Superintendent of Documents, manages strategic aspects of GPO Access, while the GPO Production Department manages and operates GPO Access on a day-to-day basis. The 22 EIDS employees are responsible for GPO Access strategic planning, the Web content management of GPO Access products and services, and the management of the Federal Bulletin Board. In addition, EIDS is responsible for providing telephone, e-mail, and fax support to users of GPO Access, and for electronic product sales and support. The day-to-day operation and maintenance of GPO Access is carried out on a reimbursable basis by the employees of the GPO Production Department.

By-Law Distribution for Other Government Agencies and Members of Congress

The By-Law Distribution Program distributes—primarily by mail—documents and other tangible information products for executive agencies and members of Congress. Section 1701, Title 44, U.S.C. prohibits the use of appropriated funds by federal departments and agencies to address, wrap, mail, or otherwise dispatch a publication for public distribution, except for certain specified materials. Such distribution work is required to be performed at GPO with the use of agency mailing lists. Nine categories of publications are specified for By-Law Distribution, including the *Daily Congressional Record*, *Legations*, the *Official Report of the Supreme Court*, and *Presidential Documents*. In fiscal year 2000, the program was supported by about three FTEs, mostly in the Laurel Operations Center, and \$529,000 was expended.

International Exchange Service

The International Exchange Service (IES) provides for the distribution of U.S. government publications to nearly 48 nations with 70 libraries in exchange for publications produced by their governments. Foreign publications are sent to the Library of Congress, which administers the program.

The Library Programs Service manages the distribution component of the Library of Congress' IES program. The Depository Administration Branch is responsible for acquiring publications and the Depository Mailing Branch is responsible for packaging, weighing, and shipping materials to IES foreign recipients. In fiscal year 2000, the Service distributed more than 360,000 paper, CD-ROM, and microfiche copies to 66 IES libraries.

The IES program cost \$687,000 in fiscal year 2000 and employed four people.

Agency Distribution Services

On behalf of certain federal agencies, the Consigned Sales Branch of the Documents Sales Service distributes publications to recipients designated by agencies and charges for the cost of services performed. This is a Revolving Fund activity. The program expended \$5 million and employed 50 staff.

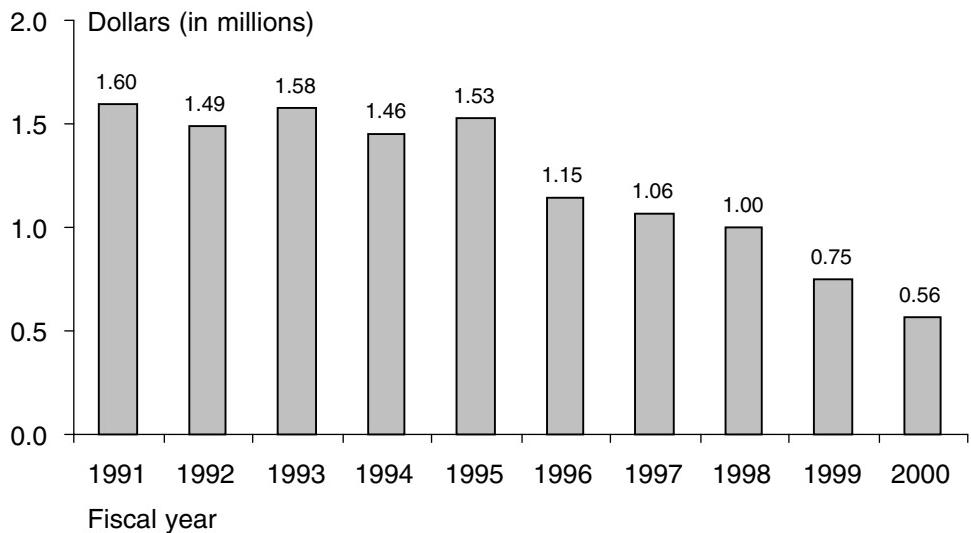
Sales of Publications

GPO sells government publications to the public for other government agencies. Although most sales are made through mail and telephone orders, the program operates 23 bookstores throughout the country and a distribution center in Pueblo, Colorado.

Unlike most of the Superintendent of Documents programs, which are funded through appropriations, the sales program is funded through the GPO Revolving Fund. In fiscal year 2000, the program generated about \$45 million in revenues, with expenditures of \$58 million—a loss of about \$12.2 million. The program employed 450 people, with most of the employees supporting order fulfillment and bookstore sales.

Almost 74 percent of the 563,000 sales orders in fiscal year 2000 were mail orders, and there were 87,000 telephone and 58,000 walk-in orders. As shown in figure 17, the number of sales orders in fiscal year 2000 declined from 1,597,000 in fiscal year 1991 to 686,000 in fiscal year 2000. GPO officials believe that the shift from a print to an electronic format, with titles now available free over the Internet, has substantially reduced the demand for printed publications from GPO, especially for relatively expensive publications, such as the *Commerce Business Daily* and the *Federal Register*. Paper subscriptions to the *Federal Register*, for example, dropped off more than 50 percent from fiscal year 1994 to fiscal year 2000.

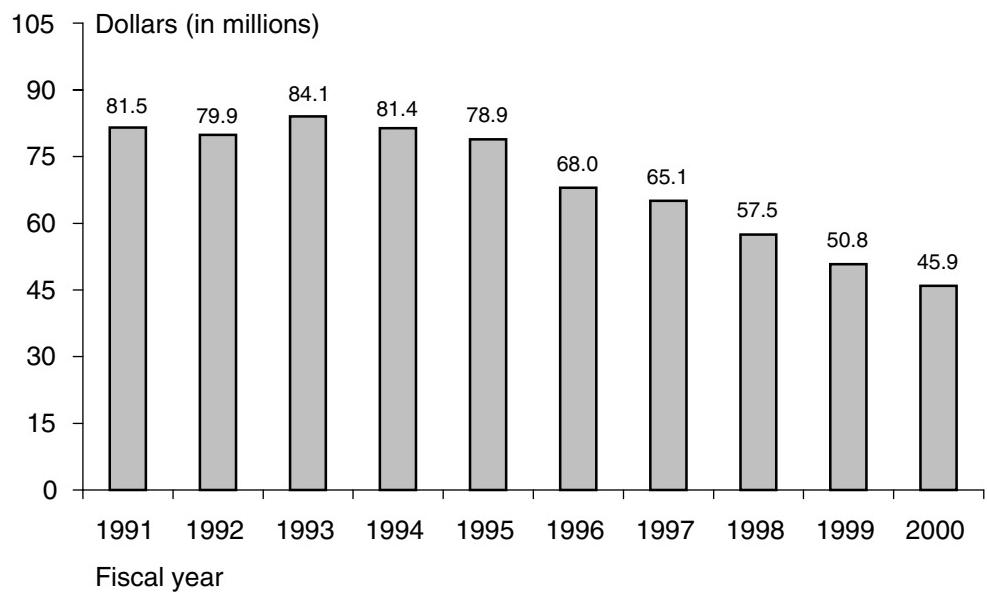
Figure 17: Retail Sales Orders, Fiscal Years 1991–2000



Source: GPO.

The decline in orders is reflected in the decline in revenues. Sales orders, sales revenue, and profits have been declining in recent years. As shown in figure 18, net sales revenues declined from \$81.5 million in fiscal year 1991 to \$45.9 million in fiscal year 2000. An additional factor contributing to the mounting losses is the destruction of unsold documents. As noted earlier, the sales program, as required by law, destroys a substantial number of unsold or superseded documents every year. In fiscal year 2000, it destroyed 1.9 million documents with a retail value of \$22.3 million and an actual cost of \$2.8 million.

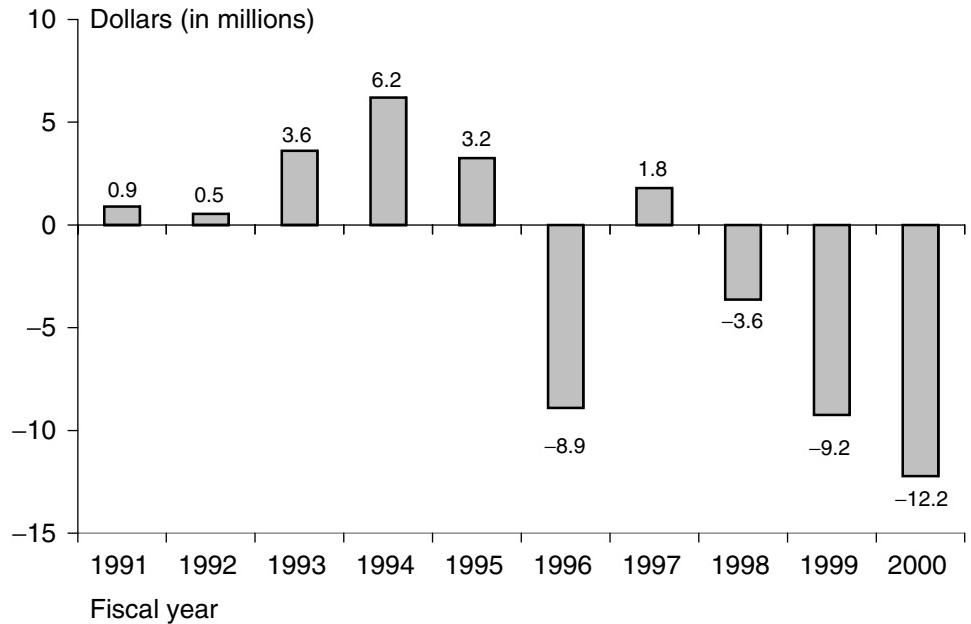
Figure 18: Net Sales Revenue, Fiscal Years 1991–2000



Source: GPO.

As shown in figure 19, the sales program operates at a deficit, with a cumulative loss of over \$32 million between fiscal year 1996 and fiscal year 2000. The program lost over \$12 million in fiscal year 2000.

Figure 19: GPO Retail Sales, Profit and Loss, Fiscal Years 1991–2000



Source: GPO.

There are currently 23 GPO bookstores located in cities throughout the United States. The GPO bookstore with the greatest sales is the main bookstore in Washington, D.C., which accounted for \$785,789 in fiscal year 2000 sales. The Cleveland bookstore has the least sales, with \$179,390 in fiscal year 2000 sales. Overall, however, GPO bookstores experienced a net loss of just over \$700,000 in fiscal year 2000, with the Chicago bookstore losing over \$250,000.

GPO's draft Sales Program 5-Year Plan (2001–2006) identifies numerous goals for achieving a revitalized and healthy sales program. These goals included reducing inventory to only 15 percent of the amount originally purchased, reducing the number of bookstores, enhancement of the U.S. Government Online Bookstore, improving services to customers, and establishing on-demand printing production for some types of printed items.

Appendix VI: Administrative Services and Infrastructure Support Provided to the Superintendent of Documents

The Office of the Superintendent of Documents and its four units—the Library Programs Service, Electronic Information Dissemination Services (EIDS), the Documents Sales Service, and the Documents Technical Support Group—are provided space and other services on a reimbursable basis by GPO. These services include

- administrative services, including payroll and personnel,
- rents, communications, and utilities, and
- information technology support.

The cost allocation for these components is shown in table 14.

Table 14: Cost Allocations for Administrative Services and Infrastructure Support Provided to the Superintendent of Documents by GPO, Fiscal Year 2000

Service	Office of the Superintendent of Documents	Library Programs Service	Electronic Information Dissemination Services	Documents Sales Service	Documents Technical Support Group	Total
Administrative services and support	\$20,894	\$983,891	\$166,470	\$3,411,562	\$109,495	\$4,692,312
Rents, communications, and utilities	\$334,341	\$645,278	\$224,322	\$5,920,961	\$166,248	\$7,291,148
Information technology	—	\$702,301	\$1,134,923	\$1,636,668	—	\$3,473,912

Source: GPO.

Administrative Services

GPO provides to the Superintendent of Documents administrative services and support, including payroll, other employee services, and services provided by the Office of Inspector General, OIRM, and others. In fiscal year 2000, the Superintendent of Documents expenses for administrative services and support were about \$4.7 million, according to GPO. The largest share of the costs for administrative services and support—\$3.4 million—was allocated to the Document Sales Service.

Rents, Communications, and Utilities

In fiscal year 2000, the Superintendent of Documents expenses for the rents, communications, and utilities provided by GPO were about \$7.3 million. The largest share of the costs for rents, communications, and utilities—\$5.9 million—was allocated to the Document Sales Service. The costs to remaining units were far smaller—\$645,000 for the Library Programs Service, \$334,000 for the Office of the Superintendent of Documents, \$224,000 for Electronic Information Dissemination Services,

and \$166,000 for the Documents Technical Support Group. Table 15 shows space allocation by organizational units.

Table 15: Space Provided to the Superintendent of Documents by GPO, Fiscal Year 2000

Organizational unit	Space in square feet
Office of the Superintendent of Documents	2,238
Library Programs Service	43,658
Electronic Information Dissemination Services	5,673
Documents Sales Service	51,351
Documents Technical Support Group	5,530
Total	108,450

Source: GPO.

Information Technology (IT) Support

GPO has approximately 240 staff providing IT support, with the majority located in the Office of Information Resources Management (OIRM). The Superintendent of Documents also receives support from the Production Department. OIRM maintains and operates a mainframe computer and several mainframe software systems used by the Library Programs Service to manage the FDLP. The Production Department operates and maintains GPO Access for the Superintendent of Documents. All headquarters units, including the Superintendent of Documents, use GPO's local area network.

In fiscal year 2000, the Superintendent of Documents expenses for the information technology provided by GPO were about \$3.5 million. The largest share of the information technology support cost was allocated to the Document Sales Service (\$1.6 million), followed by Electronic Information Dissemination Services (\$1.1 million) and the Library Programs Service (\$700,000).

IT support is supplied to four programs: the FDLP, Cataloging and Indexing, Sales of Publications, and GPO Access.

The FDLP is supported by four systems: (1) The Depository Distribution Information System (DDIS), (2) the Acquisition, Classification and Shipment Information System (ACESIS), (3) the Automated Depository Distribution System (ADDS), and the System for the Automated Management of Text from a Hierarchical Arrangement (SAMANTHA). The four systems are operated and maintained by the GPO OIRM. One component of ADDS is maintained under contract by its developer. These systems are described as follows:

1. DDIS maintains depository library address information, depository item number selection profiles, item number and Superintendent of Documents classification information, and an interface to ADDS. The DDIS databases contain about 2.7 million records.
2. ACSIS is a large system with almost 1 million records. Its database contains bibliographic information for all titles in the depository library system that are ordered, received, processed, and distributed to depository libraries. The system has an interface to DDIS for Superintendent of Documents classification number, piece number, and shipping count information.
3. ADDS (formerly known as the lighted bin system) was procured by Engineered Systems, Inc., of Omaha. This system aids in the distribution of government materials to over 1,300 depository libraries. ADDS guides the physical distribution of publications to depository libraries by providing visual cues—via lighted bins—to personnel, showing which libraries should receive copies of the publications being distributed. ADDS operates with a daily batch interface with DDIS for item number, shipping count, depository address, and shipping list information. The ADDS database contains about 20,000 records. The system handling the actual lighting of the bins is maintained by Engineered Systems. Follow-up audit trails and report generation are performed on the OIRM mainframe.
4. SAMANTHA prepares OCLC bibliographic records in MARC (machine-readable cataloging) format for publication of the printed version of the *Monthly Catalog*, the *Catalog of U.S. Government Publications*, and the creation of cataloging tapes sold by the Library of Congress.

The Library Programs Service is planning to replace these systems with an off-the-shelf Integrated Library System (ILS) in fiscal year 2002. However, if the depository library program were transferred to the Library of Congress, much of the information system support currently provided by the mainframe systems could be provided to the program by the Library's ILS.

The GPO Production Department supports the FDLP on a reimbursable basis. The Department maintains the servers with the FDLP Electronic Collection, develops interactive Web-based services for depository libraries—including Library Directory and Biennial Survey—and maintains the servers where the FDLP Desktop and Locator Services reside.

**Appendix VI: Administrative Services and
Infrastructure Support Provided to the
Superintendent of Documents**

GPO Access operates on more than 40 Compaq Alpha servers running the UNIX operating system and a dedicated Fiber Distributed Data Interface ring. Public access is provided through a broadband connection to GPO's Internet service provider. Data are formatted and searched through the Wide Area Information Service (WAIS).¹

In support of the Sales of Publications program, GPO has spent about \$11 million since 1988 to develop and implement its Integrated Processing System. The system is to replace 15 stand-alone legacy systems currently supporting the Sales of Publications program, which officials stated are over 20 years old and do not meet GPO's current and future needs. Currently, GPO's goal is to complete acceptance testing of the contractor-developed system in June 2001 and begin implementing it shortly thereafter.

¹WAIS is a commercial software package that allows the indexing and searching of large quantities of information on the Internet.

Appendix VII: Essential Documents for Public Use That Will Remain in Paper Format

Based on an initial list developed in 1996, the Superintendent of Documents has identified the following “Essential Titles for Public Use in Paper Format.”

Title	Available online?
Agricultural Statistics	✓
Budget of the United States Government	✓
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance	✓
Code of Federal Regulations	✓
Condition of Education	✓
Congressional Directory	✓
Congressional Record (final bound edition) ^a	
Constitution of the United States, Analysis and Interpretation	
Consumer Price Index Detailed Report	
Crime in the United States	✓
Decennial Census	
Digest of Educational Statistics	✓
Economic Census	
Economic Indicators	✓
Economic Report of the President	✓
Federal Register	✓
Foreign Relations of the United States	✓
Green Book (Committee on Ways and Means)	✓
Handbook of North American Indians	
Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States	✓
Health US	✓
Letters to Delegates of Congress	
List of Sections Affected—Code of Federal Regulations	✓
Monthly Labor Review	✓
North American Industry Classification System Manual	
Occupational Outlook Handbook	✓
Producer Price Index—Detailed Report	
Public Papers of the President	✓
Social Security Bulletin	✓
Social Security Handbook	
Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics	✓
Statutes at Large	
State and Metropolitan Area Data Book	✓
Statistical Abstract of the United States	✓
Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States	
Treaties in Force	✓
United States Government Manual	✓
United States Industry and Trade Outlook	
United States Code	✓
United States Congressional Serial Set ^a	✓

Appendix VII: Essential Documents for Public Use That Will Remain in Paper Format

Title	Available online?
United States Reports	✓
World Factbook	✓

^aBound editions with distribution currently limited to regional depository libraries and one library in each state without a regional depository library.

Source: GPO.

Appendix VIII: Previous Reform Initiatives

Advances in information technologies—and most notably in electronic publishing and the Internet—have triggered numerous proposals to reform and restructure the nation’s information dissemination infrastructure in general and the Office of the Superintendent of Documents in particular. These reforms range from a 1988 proposal by the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) for the creation of a Government Information Corporation to the most recent proposal by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Sciences (NCLIS) to consolidate federal printing and dissemination programs in a newly created Public Information Resources Administration.

OTA Proposal to Restructure the Superintendent of Documents

In 1988, an OTA report¹ addressed the impact of electronic technology on federal information dissemination, examined the infrastructure for federal information dissemination, and offered several institutional alternatives for the Superintendent of Documents. These alternatives included centralizing all or most government dissemination functions in one office or agency; privatizing the Superintendent of Documents; reorganizing the Superintendent of Documents as part of a legislative printing office; and consolidating the Superintendent of Documents with the National Technical Information Service and creating a Government Information Office or Corporation.

Depository Library Council Proposal to Restructure FDLP

In a 1993 report² to the Superintendent of Documents, the Depository Library Council recommended restructuring the FDLP. The Council noted that as structured, the depository library program was foundering so badly that its very existence was threatened, and suggested restructuring the program to ensure its future viability. The Council proposed ten alternative FDLP models, ranging from the creation of a National Collection of Last Resort³ to the development of a network of super-

¹*Informing the Nation: Federal Information Dissemination in an Electronic Age* (Office of Technology Assessment, October 1988).

²*Alternatives for Restructuring the Depository Library Program, a Report to the Superintendent of Documents and the Public Printer*, discussion draft (Depository Library Council, June 14, 1993).

³The proposed National Collection would house at least one copy of each government document printed or produced electronically and would provide access, as a depository library of last resort, to copies of documents by reproduction, interlibrary loan, or electronic transmission for other depository libraries throughout the country.

The Government Information Dissemination and Printing Improvement Act of 1993

regional depository libraries. No action was taken on the Council's proposals.

The Government Printing Office Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act of 1993

Concerned about the potential impact of the Internet on federal information dissemination, the Congress passed the Government Printing Office Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act. The act directed the Superintendent of Documents to provide a system of online access to the *Congressional Record* and the *Federal Register* by June 1994. In response, GPO created GPO Access—an Internet portal that provides free online access to FDLP libraries. In December 1995, GPO made GPO Access available free of charge over the Internet.

Wendell H. Ford Government Publications Reform Act of 1998

In 1998 a government printing reform bill was introduced by Senator John Warner as S. 2288—the Wendell H. Ford Government Publications Reform Act of 1998. The focus of the legislation was to restructure the federal printing laws to eliminate reliance on the constitutionally suspect authorities of the Joint Committee on Printing and to strengthen the Government Printing Office's control of federal agency printing and other dissemination activities and its responsibility for providing permanent public access to government information.

The bill would have abolished the Joint Committee on Printing and transferred many of its responsibilities to the House Committee on House Oversight and the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration. The bill also would have renamed GPO the Government Publications Office, to be administered by the Public Printer. The production of all government publications, regardless of form or format, was to be centralized in the new Government Publications Office, except such production required by the Supreme Court and certain national security entities. A presidentially appointed Superintendent of Government Publications Access Programs would have assumed the duties of the current Superintendent of Documents, administering the GPO sales, federal depository library program, and GPO electronic documents access programs.

NCLIS Proposal to Create Public Information Resources Administration

The most recent proposal to reorganize the federal information infrastructure was made in January 2001 by NCLIS. The Commission proposes the creation of a new agency whose primary mission is to serve as the federal government's focal point for providing timely dissemination and permanent public availability of its public information resources. This agency, provisionally called the Public Information Resources Administration (PIRA), would be in the executive branch and would bring together under one management the National Technical Information Service, the programs currently under the Superintendent of Documents at GPO (including the FDLP), and other information sales and dissemination programs from all three branches of government.

In the Commission's sweeping proposal, the Superintendent of Documents would be renamed the Superintendent of Public Information Resources, reporting directly to the head of the PIRA. The FDLP would be renamed the Public Information Resources Access Program (PIRAP), and the Federal Depository Libraries would be renamed Public Information Resources Access Libraries (PIRA Libraries). The basic structure of the FDLP or the congressional designation and other criteria for becoming a federal depository library would not be changed.

Appendix IX: Comments From the Government Printing Office



United States Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20401

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC PRINTER

March 21, 2001

Mr. Joel C. Willemssen
Managing Director
Information Technology Issues
U.S. General Accounting Office
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Willemssen:

This letter conveys the comments of the Government Printing Office (GPO) on the draft General Accounting Office (GAO) report *Information Dissemination: Electronic Dissemination of Government Publications* (GAO-01-428). The report was undertaken pursuant to the conference report on H.R. 4516, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act for FY 2002 (H. Rpt. 106-796), which requires GAO to conduct a “comprehensive study on the impact of providing documents to the public solely in electronic format,” and to evaluate the feasibility of transferring GPO’s Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) to the Library of Congress (LC).

The day is coming when Federal Government information may be made available to the public solely in electronic format, but that day is not here yet nor is it likely to appear in the foreseeable future. Apart from the fact that large amounts of Federal information are not digitized, significant issues concerning security, permanence, authentication, equity, and cost remain to be resolved before the American people can put their faith in an electronic dissemination system that will serve as one of the foundations of their social contract with the Government. Unfortunately, the draft report’s attention to these and related issues is simply too cursory to resolve them.

LC is a unique national institution of singular importance to Congress and the public. As a sister legislative branch agency, GPO has a longstanding relationship with LC that we value very highly; LC is a selective depository library, and we work together on many issues of importance in the field of Government information dissemination. With all due respect, however, LC is not an appropriate home for the FDLP. Its mission and operations are inconsistent with a large-scale publications/information dissemination program. Transferring the FDLP there will increase costs, impose additional burdens on LC, and not result in any improvement in the public’s ability to access Government information. While GAO’s analysts appear to have made an

energetic attempt to develop a plan for the transfer, the resulting product contains a number of problems, based primarily on the assumption that the FDLP could be transferred to the LC without negative program impacts. In my view, these problems will minimize its usefulness to Congress.

Impact of All-Electronic Dissemination. The draft report is unable to demonstrate how the problems of ensuring authenticity, security, and permanence will be resolved in an all-electronic Government information environment. GPO has made significant efforts to address these problems, such as convening a Government-wide working group on permanent public access, the procurement of Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) technology, and continually upgrading security measures, and these efforts are ongoing. However, the report makes no contribution to addressing these issues beyond restating what GPO itself has pioneered, and does not discuss how LC would address or improve upon GPO's efforts. Moreover, it makes no reference to security issues, which are becoming increasingly important in an era when computer viruses can severely disable information systems worldwide in a matter of hours.

Another problem is the minimal examination of the issues surrounding the impact of an all-electronic requirement on the FDLP's statutory mandate for equitable access. GAO's opinion that "electronic documents offer far greater functionality than traditional paper documents" is only true—if at all—when the user has the proper technology at hand and the skills to use it. The draft report itself notes that the National Telecommunications and Information Administration recently found that 60 percent of American households have no access to the Internet. By contrast, the only barriers to the use of printed documents are basic literacy and physical disability, and the U.S. literacy rate far exceeds the estimates of the number of people with access to and the skills to use digital technology. Moreover, with the changes in paper manufacturing in recent years, permanency of paper is now virtually assured.

Although the FDLP serves a large number of libraries and users who are in a very sophisticated technological environment, the program is statutorily grounded in equity of access for all. During the transition to a more electronic FDLP—a transition planned and executed by GPO in partnership with Congress, Federal agencies, the judiciary, and the library and Government information communities—we have been showing due diligence in moving with all deliberate speed in making electronic dissemination the norm to the maximum extent that is appropriate. Nevertheless, the FDLP continues to distribute thousands of titles for which there are no electronic equivalents. Unless Congress is willing to appropriate the substantially increased funds to convert these publications to electronic formats, access to these titles will be lost in an all-electronic environment. The GAO draft report does not discuss how an entirely electronic program for Government information would be feasible in view of the FDLP's statutory mandate, what limitations it would have for the estimated 9.5 million public users of the FDLP annually, or how it would be more achievable by LC.

The draft report asserts that "electronic documents cost far less to store, maintain, and disseminate." It overlooks the fact that, because of the ease with which agencies are able to make publications available on the Web, the number of publications eligible for inclusion in the FDLP is increasing significantly. For FY 2001 to date, 16,525 titles have been added to the program, 61 percent in electronic format. The work involved in identifying, securing, archiving,

See comment 1.

See comment 2.

See comment 3.

See comment 4.

and establishing bibliographic control of electronic publications—as well as the cost of supplying and maintaining the technology infrastructure for high-volume use—is growing significantly. In addition, continuous efforts are required to manage a digital archive to avoid deterioration of storage media and technological obsolescence of hardware and software. FDLP program managers have long recognized that these requirements will generate costs at or above current program levels. An electronic Government information environment is also generating substantial additional costs for users and depository libraries, yet the draft report pays only scant attention to these. Absent from the draft report is an economic analysis of the costs of an all-electronic Government information dissemination program, including an analysis of cost impacts on end users, on depository libraries and their equipment and staffing needs, and on LC for providing such a service.

See comment 5.

Transferring the FDLP to LC. Although required by H. Rpt. 106-796 to specify “how such a transfer might be accomplished,” “when such a transfer might optimally occur,” “the costs...of such a transfer,” and “measures that are necessary to ensure the success of such a transfer,” the draft report’s findings are basically equivocal, citing both advantages and disadvantages to the transfer, and provide little specific information on how such a transfer might be accomplished beyond proposing the creation of a GPO/LC/library community task force to guide it. It is difficult to see how this part of the report will be of much assistance to Congress. Fundamentally, the draft report does not address how public access to Government information would be improved by transferring the FDLP to LC.

See comment 6.

The draft report includes a statement once made by LC that its mission and the mission of the FDLP are “not inconsistent,” yet at the same time the report cites testimony from the library community that the two missions “vary so significantly that the appropriateness of a transfer is questionable.” LC, in its 1993 and 1994 evaluations of a possible assumption of GPO’s Superintendent of Documents operations, questioned whether taking on those functions “might diffuse the Library’s principal focus—service to Congress.” One question that arises in this context is whether LC’s assumption of the FDLP would change the future treatment of certain publications issued by units of LC, such as CRS issue briefs and related materials, which are not included in the FDLP today.

See comment 7.

In taking on the FDLP, LC would assume the added burden for ensuring the comprehensiveness of the FDLP collection. This burden would result from breaking the efficient link between production and dissemination that resides in GPO. To maintain the link, the draft report proposes leaving the FDLP physically in place at GPO but under LC management. In the absence of any demonstrated improvement to public access, that proposal seems to be nothing more than a solution in search of a problem.

Both LC and GAO cite a similarity between LC’s National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS/BPH) and the FDLP as evidence of a consistency of missions. In fact, LC’s 1994 study said “the depository program is *somewhat similar* to the NLS/BPH in that both have a mission to distribute materials to libraries” (emphasis added). Indeed, the similarities end there. The two programs are very different in terms of the amount of material distributed and the number of libraries and people served. According to its FY 2001 budget submission, the NLS/BPH distributes books and other materials of all kinds to 761,000 patrons

and 138 network libraries. The FDLP by comparison disseminated last year 12.2 million copies of 29,000 Government titles to more than 1,300 libraries—including academic, research, law, public, and other libraries—utilized by an estimated 9.5 million persons (not counting the more than 200,000 titles made available via *GPO Access* and retrieved by the public at a rate of more than 26 million per month), and supported by the Government's cataloging and indexing authority for Government documents and a variety of other specialized services. In addition, under the FDLP the Government retains ownership of the distributed publications and the FDLP libraries are bound by statute to properly maintain the material and to provide access and service to the public.

The fact is that a large-scale publications/information dissemination operation such as the FDLP (like other Superintendent of Documents programs) is not consistent with LC operations. LC itself has suggested this before, and to this day it continues to rely on GPO to manage the distribution component of the International Exchange Program, which LC administers. Observers will recall that LC also cautiously approached the assumption of the Department of Commerce's National Technical Information Service operations when that transfer was proposed in 1999, in part presumably for the same reason.

The draft report is silent regarding the specific legislative changes that would be necessary to effect the transfer. Transferring the FDLP to LC would remove it from the oversight of the Joint Committee on Printing, could negatively impact the now-close relationship of the library community with FDLP program officials, and would call into question the future role of the Depository Library Council to the Public Printer. GAO contends that the separation of powers issue—which has never been adjudicated in a court of law with respect to the printing provisions of Title 44—is used by executive branch agencies to print without going through GPO, a situation viewed as a major factor in the “fugitive documents” problem. However, the draft does not address how aligning the FDLP with LC—another legislative branch agency—would improve this situation.

There is only a brief indication in the report about the cost impact on other GPO operations as a result of the transfer. GPO is required by law to fully allocate overhead and is unique in the legislative branch in the extent to which this is done. Overhead costs are spread to all of GPO's programs and are funded indirectly by those programs. If the FDLP and related programs are transferred to LC, a large part of the \$4.7 million for administrative services and \$3.5 million for information services would remain with GPO indefinitely. The inability to spread and share these costs over a larger number of activities would have a negative impact on other GPO operations, including congressional printing and the annual appropriation used to fund it, unless there is a reduction to those costs, such as a Reduction-in-Force for other GPO personnel.

The draft report is not clear about what level of organizational priorities the transferred FDLP would receive from LC. The report asserts that “a transfer...might also facilitate the depository library program and the Library working together to address the broad issues of acquiring, managing, and disseminating digital information...” However, it should be noted that LC's work in this area is heavily focussed in the area of copyright, intellectual property, and rights management, both because it is the administrator of the Nation's copyright mechanism, and because a preponderance of its collections in all formats are composed of works that are not in the public domain. This presents a huge technological challenge and a substantial commitment

See comment 8.

See comment 9.

See comment 10.

of funds and expertise. There is no analysis of the percentage of last year's \$100 million special appropriation to LC to develop a National Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program that would be devoted to public access to Government information.

Other questions remain unanswered. Assuming it is physically moved, where would the FDLP be placed organizationally within LC? Would it be kept together as a discrete unit, or would its functions be distributed among existing LC organizations? Would GPO's Cataloging and Indexing Program be organized within LC's cataloging effort or would it remain with the FDLP? In its 1994 study, LC observed that "the issue of fulfilling the depository libraries' needs while ensuring that overarching [LC] cataloging objectives are also met is one that must be resolved." What would happen to the rapid bibliographic support that GPO's Cataloging and Indexing program provides for depository librarians if it is transferred to LC? If the FDLP were to be divided among existing LC organizations, how would that impact its operations? What would be the effect of these changes on Government information users?

The draft report indicates that there would be impacts on the transferred employees, but these impacts are not fully spelled out. The ability of the transferred employees to retain wage bargaining rights—currently provided by 44 U.S.C. 305—would be subject to legislation. Retaining such rights, however, would affect their relationship with other LC employees, who do not bargain for wages. Other impacts are not discussed. Would the transferred employees retain their present position classifications and grades? Would they be entitled to the same employee protections they currently have at GPO? Assuming the FDLP function is physically transferred, where would the transferred employees be housed—in the District or elsewhere? Is there space in the current LC buildings? Would there be an area match with current space allocated to the FDLP by GPO?

GPO Access. Many of the electronic databases on *GPO Access*, such as the *Congressional Record*, the *U.S. Code*, the *Code of Federal Regulations*, the *Federal Register*, and others, are derived from the printing processes managed by GPO's Production Department. While the draft report briefly notes the role of the Production Department in managing the day-to-day operations of *GPO Access*, there is no discussion of how *GPO Access* might be separated from GPO's production operation and its mission to support Congress. In fact, such a transfer could lead to a duplication of effort and expenditures between GPO and LC if LC assumes the preparation of the electronic databases that it distributes. Authenticity and security could also be compromised by removing the locus for dissemination of the databases from GPO to another location.

Additionally, the draft report misrepresents the function and role of the FDLP Electronic Collection (FDLP/EC) with respect to *GPO Access*. Occasionally the draft report refers to the FDLP/EC as a part of *GPO Access*, and in other places it is referred to as a Superintendent of Documents program. Neither characterization is correct, as the FDLP/EC extends beyond the boundaries of *GPO Access* into partner institutions and agencies and exists as an operation within the FDLP.

The report does not deal with other aspects of *GPO Access*, including GPO's Online Bookstore, the Federal Web sites hosted on *GPO Access* (including the Supreme Court's site), the Federal Bulletin Board, the FDLP Desktop program administrative information, and the popular *Ben's*

See comment 11.

See comment 12.

See comment 13.

See comment 14.

See comment 15.

Guide to the U.S. Government for Kids. The report is silent about whether these other components of **GPO Access** would be transferred to LC.

Factual Inaccuracies and Misinterpretations. The report draft contains a number of factual inaccuracies (e.g., implying that the GPO bookstores are part of the FDLP, identifying the FDLP/EC as a discrete program, inaccurate descriptions of the responsibilities of various GPO offices and personnel, misinterpretation of statistical information, incorrect statements about the role of regional depositories, etc.). We also question the purpose of the many appendices concerning the Documents Sales Program, when that program is not subject to transfer in the charge to GAO by H. Rpt. 106-796. My staff is available to work with GAO's analysts to correct these errors before the report is finalized.

Lack of Balance in Presentation. I strongly feel there is a lack of balance in the presentation of information from prior GAO audits. The GAO audit which claimed that GPO has a "monopoly-like" structure with respect to the acquisition of printing was conducted more than a decade ago, in 1989, and the recommendations it contained were officially closed out in a letter to us from GAO dated October 1993. The premise of that audit was faulty to begin with, since GPO utilizes thousands of private sector contractors on a highly competitive basis to acquire up to 75 percent of its production requirements. Indeed, Congress rejected a proposal, later contained in Vice President Al Gore's Reinventing Government project and based on that GAO audit, to remove the statutory requirement that all Federal agencies utilize GPO for their printing needs. Shortly afterward, Congress reaffirmed the existing Title 44 requirement for agencies to use GPO by incorporating "duplicating" into the statutory definition of printing found in the note to 44 U.S.C. 501.

Most importantly, however, GPO's operations have changed a great deal since that 1989 study was conducted. Indeed, a management audit of GPO commissioned by Congress and conducted in 1998 by Booz-Allen & Hamilton, Inc.—working under contract with GAO at the direction of the House Appropriations Committee—reached a number of very different conclusions. Booz-Allen found strong support in Congress for GPO's in-house production operations for congressional printing, stating that GPO's production area "effectively satisfies its priority congressional customers and meets the variable demands and outputs requested by Congress." Booz-Allen auditors found "universal support" among the agencies for our printing procurement program. The report says "these agencies viewed this service that GPO provides as an example of 'government at its best,' and none of them felt that they wanted or could do this function better than GPO." Finally, Booz-Allen noted strong support for GPO's dissemination programs, especially the FDLP, and offered highly favorable comments on GPO's electronic information dissemination efforts that were not present a decade ago. These more recent findings about GPO should be used in any review of GPO's statutory structure, not a study that was conducted more than a decade ago, before the advent of significant downsizing (GPO's workforce has been reduced by more than 30 percent in the past decade) and the introduction of electronic information technologies that have made all GPO operations considerably more efficient and cost-effective.

The final word on GPO should come from the court of public opinion. In 1998, 1999, and 2000, GPO was named the top in-plant operation in the country by *In-Plant Graphics* magazine, a

widely respected trade journal in the printing industry. Also in 1999, GPO was named by *PC Week* magazine as one of the top technology innovators in the Nation. In 1999, *GPO Access* was selected as one of the top 50 legal research web sites for the year by *Law Office Computing* magazine, and was named best research site for laws and best Government site overall by the newsletter *legal.online*. It was chosen as the first recipient of the American Association of Law Libraries Public Access to Government Information Award. In 1998, *GPO Access* was named one of the 15 "Best Feds on the Web" by *Government Executive* magazine. Other awards have included a 1994 Technology Leadership Award and the prestigious 1995 James Madison Award from the Coalition on Government Information.

Conclusion. Overall, the draft report does not provide the "comprehensive study on the impact of providing documents to the public solely in electronic format" ordered by H. Rpt. 106-796. Instead, major issues such as authenticity, permanent public access, security, equity of access, and cost considerations are only briefly noted as items that "should be addressed."

The transfer of the FDLP and selected other Superintendent of Documents programs to LC may be "feasible," but is it desirable? Would it benefit public users of Government information? The report suggests that there may be significant disadvantages to such a transfer. Similarly, there is no discussion of how or if LC might improve dissemination to the libraries and the public over the services provided by GPO.

Finally, there are errors of fact and bias in the presentation that we feel should be remedied. We are available to work with GAO personnel on these matters. To do so, please contact Mr. Francis J. Buckley, Jr., Superintendent of Documents, on 512-0571.

Sincerely,


MICHAEL F. DiMARIO
Public Printer

cc: The Honorable Mitch McConnell
The Honorable Bob Ney
The Honorable Christopher Dodd
The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer

GAO Comments

1. Our report refers to security issues within the context of authenticity. Specifically, we note that authentication provides the assurance that a document has not been surreptitiously or accidentally modified, which are problems that can be avoided with appropriate security controls.
2. The report has been revised to reflect that electronic documents may offer greater functionality than paper documents. However, we disagree with the Public Printer's statement that the only barriers to the use of printed documents are basic literacy and physical disability. In fact, other barriers exist including geographic distance from the library where the printed information is maintained. In addition, the costs associated with maintaining paper documents may limit what is readily available.
3. Our report states that GPO would face major challenges—including ensuring equity of access—in moving to an environment in which government information is disseminated solely in electronic format. GPO raises valid concerns about how to achieve equity of access in an electronic environment and how this would be more achievable by the Library. Resolving such concerns is beyond the scope of what we were mandated to study.
4. We agree that total program costs may increase if the number of the documents eligible for inclusion in the depository library program also increases because of the availability of documents on the Web or other factors. We also recognize in our report that electronic dissemination may result in costs shifting to end users and depository libraries. Finally, an economic analysis of dissemination costs is beyond the scope of this study, but we do include the results of GPO's own study of the costs of converting to an all-electronic depository library system.
5. The policy decision of whether to transfer the library program is one that rests with the Congress. Our role is to provide factual information—including advantages and disadvantages—that can be used to inform the decision-making process. The question of how public access to government information might be improved by transferring the depository library program to the Library is a valid one but clearly beyond our charge.
6. Our report points out that if a decision is made to transfer the depository library program, policymakers may want to consider limiting the physical movement of staff and equipment. This is offered

as a measure for ensuring the success of a potential transfer, in response to our mandate.

7. The Public Printer is correct in stating that the depository library program is much larger in scope than the Library's National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. In recognition of this, our report notes that the Library cautioned in its studies that administering the depository library program would considerably expand the Library's mission.
8. A transfer of the depository library program would clearly require changes to legislation. However, a detailed discussion of the specific changes needed would be difficult, if not impossible, without knowing the details of a policy decision that, to date, has not been made. The Public Printer's question concerning the effect of a transfer on fugitive documents is valid, and our report highlights the concerns of the library community related to this issue.
9. The Public Printer is correct in stating that if a transfer is directed, spreading GPO's current overhead costs over the programs remaining at GPO would result in increased costs for those programs. He is also correct that some reduction in overhead costs may, as a result, be warranted. We would expect that this issue would be addressed during transition planning. Further, we would expect that the transition team would identify and consider all options for dealing with this issue, including transferring the positions supporting the depository library program to the Library.
10. If a decision is made to transfer the depository library program to the Library, the Librarian would, of course, have to address the priority of the transferred program within the context of the mission of the Library.
11. The Public Printer also points out many detailed implementation questions that our report does not address. We believe such questions can be addressed if and when a decision is made to transfer the depository library program and the details of the functions to be transferred are known.
12. In regard to the impact on transferred employees, the report identifies the concerns of unions representing GPO employees and states that issues such as seniority, salary rates, and bargaining rights should be addressed during transition planning.

13. In regard to a potential transfer of GPO Access, our report does not suggest that the Library duplicate GPO's preparation of the data bases that are derived from the printing processes currently managed by the production department or that dissemination of the databases be moved to another location. If a decision is made to transfer the program, we are confident that detailed transition planning—conducted by the Library and GPO—would result in an appropriate and cost-effective division of responsibilities between the two organizations.
14. The report has been revised to reflect that GPO Access is a program.
15. The report has been revised to reflect that GPO Access also includes GPO's U.S. Government Online Bookstore. A discussion of the remaining components is contained in appendix V.

Appendix X: Comments From the Library of Congress



THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

March 21, 2001

Dear Mr. Willemssen:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft report, Electronic Dissemination of Government Publications, prepared by the U.S. General Accounting Office in response to a congressional directive contained in the Conference Report for the Legislative Branch Appropriations for 2001 (comments on specific areas of concern are covered in the attachment). The report is clearly the product of a very rapid review of the operational responsibilities assigned to the U.S. Government Printing Office. It also provides a more cursory review of documentation related to the mission of the Library of Congress. The report finds that the missions of the two agencies are not incompatible and recommends that an Interagency Transition Team be established to plan the transition and that it be led by the Librarian of Congress.

I do not think that sufficient analysis has been done to support such a recommendation at this time, particularly in light of the recent mandate (Public Law 106-554) from the Congress that designated the Library of Congress as the lead agency in the development of the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP). As part of this collaborative strategic planning effort, the Library will examine the complex issues related to the collection, dissemination, and permanent access to electronic government information.

The issues involved in crafting a proposal to improve public access to government information and to develop the governmental structure to support enhanced access are myriad and complex. The report by the GAO focuses exclusively on shifting functions from one legislative branch agency to another. It does not concentrate on the larger policy issues involved in providing citizens with useful and persistent access to government information. The overall goal of the proposed transfer of responsibility must be to improve public access and ensure permanent access to useful government information. The analysis should, therefore, factor in telecommunications and networked information advances, changes in the ways that people are using information in their everyday lives, and particularly, the ways in which citizens put government information to useful purposes. These issues will be addressed by the Library through the mandate of the NDIIPP.

The pervasiveness of the Internet has changed the public's expectation regarding convenient access to information by and about its government. Therefore, I believe that the question that should be posed and answered in an integrated fashion, is: *How would the transfer of the functions of the Superintendent of Documents to the Library of Congress enhance the usefulness and usability of government information to the American public, and what would be the costs of effecting such a transformation in program direction and agency administration?* I fear that if we were to implement the recommendations in the draft report without further analysis and goal setting, the Congress might not achieve the desired results, cost efficiencies

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Appendix X: Comments From the Library of Congress

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might not be realized, and serious unintended consequences would likely occur. Furthermore, any transfer of GPO responsibilities to the Library would require significant statutory changes to provisions in Title 44.

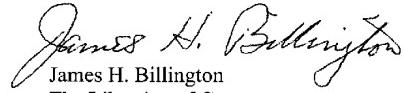
Increasingly throughout the last two centuries, the Congress has given its library a unique and ambitious mandate – to make its resources available and useful to the Congress and the American people and to sustain and preserve a universal collection of knowledge and creativity for future generations. The Library is strongly committed to using digital technology to enhance and extend access to these collections, including public access to information produced by the federal sector.

We believe that our new assignment from the 106th Congress to provide leadership in developing a National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program provides a coherent and results-oriented means for responding to the Congress's legitimate concerns about cost-effective access to government information. We will be working, as directed by this new legislation, in concert with other Federal entities, including the National Archives and Records Administration, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, other library and technology organizations, and the private sector to develop a long-term strategy for dealing with the entire life cycle of digital information. In the course of this activity, we will consult with GPO about the life cycle of government information.

We must continue the leadership role that Congress has long expected from us, and has recently reaffirmed, in the development of standards for digital information, in expanding the Library's digital preservation research, and in providing leadership for collaboration with libraries from around the world. Each of these activities supports the Library's role in sharing the richness of our collections with the American people. The Library will continue to follow Congressional directives related to the dissemination of government information. However, we feel that the most rational way to proceed at this point is by incorporating an examination of issues related to management of electronic government information into the larger NDIIPP recently enacted by the Congress.

I look forward to working with you and the Congress on the exciting task of bringing the national government information policy into the 21st century.

Sincerely,



James H. Billington
The Librarian of Congress

Enclosure

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